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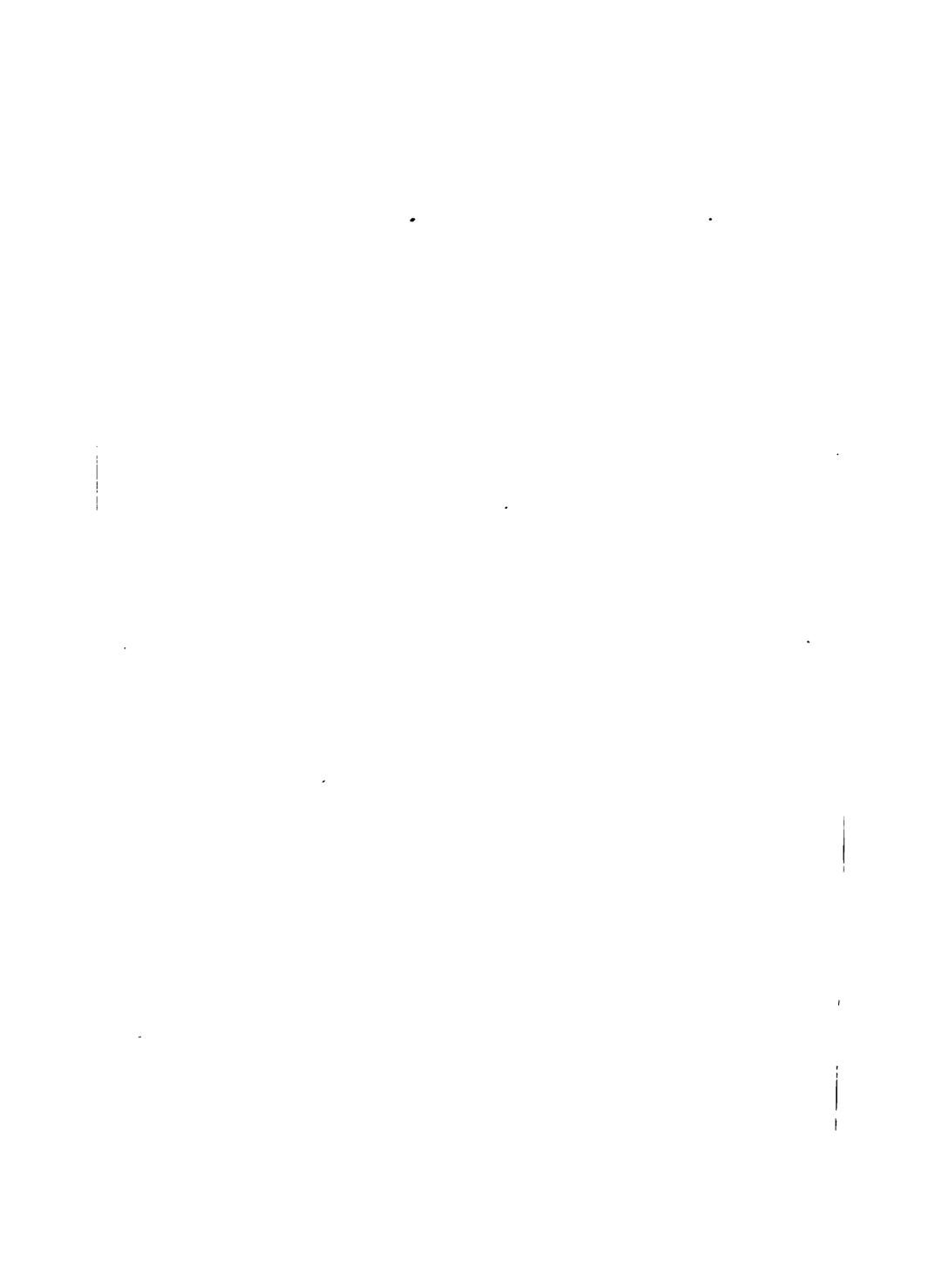
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HOME IS HOME.

“ AND if a trouble dimmed their golden joy,
Twas outward dross and not infused alloy ;
Their Home knew but affection’s look and speech,
A little Heaven above dissension’s reach.

CAMPBELL.

“ SMILES on past misfortune’s brow
Soft reflection’s hand can trace ;
And o’er the cheek of sorrow throw
A melancholy grace ;
While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or the deep shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

GRAY. *Ode on Vicissitude.*

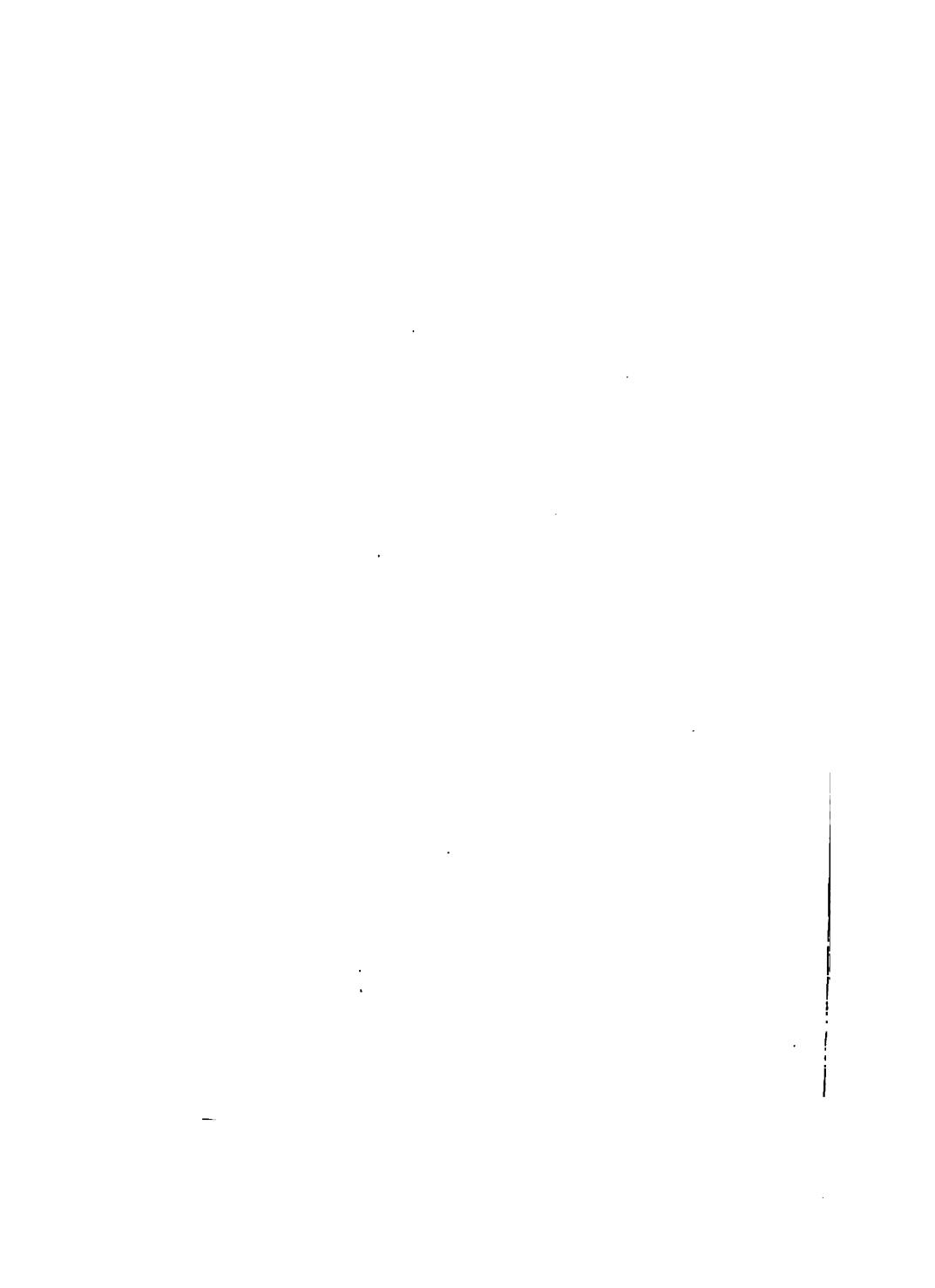
HOME IS HOME.

A DOMESTIC TALE.



LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1851

24a. 6. 277.





HOME IS HOME.

CHAPTER I.



COLD foggy November afternoon had driven from the foot-path nearly all the more respectable of the inhabitants of — street, which, as every one knows, is the long suburb by which London makes its exit on the — side of its busy thoroughfares. The shops here are few, and of comparatively small importance ; and the street, though still described as part of the great Metropolis, has more the appearance and advantages of a small country town. A tolerably good linen draper's shop, a chemist's, and a library with its comfortable reading and news-room, form its principal attractions. Mr. Dalton's reading room had for some time been the resort of all the principal gentlemen in that locality or within a mile of its influence, and here might be heard much of the gossip of the neighbourhood. It was on this " cold, foggy, November after-

noon," that an elderly gentleman was still lingering by the fire in the corner of Mr. Dalton's shop : the customers were nearly all gone, and in that part of the room which was devoted to the newspaper-readers, none remained save the elderly gentleman we have mentioned, and he seemed still unwilling to leave the blazing fire, and face the cold and foggy air of the street. Mr. Dalton called the shop-boy to "turn on the gas" and to put coals on the fire: but it was evident that with all the patient civility for which he was remarkable, he would have been very glad to wish "Mr. Crosby" good evening and retire to his own comfortable room within the shop, where good, neat, pretty Mrs. Dalton, and his little boy would gladly welcome him for his half-hour of leisure; but still Mr. Crosby lingered, looked into the fire, and round the shop, then buttoned his coat and felt for gloves, hovered over the fire, and departed not. At length the good bookseller ventured to address him.

"Did you know any thing, Sir, of the gentleman at whose house the sale is to take place to-morrow?"

"Sale! hey? no no, I don't know of any sale—whose is it, hey?"

"At Belmont Villa, Sir," replied Mr. Dalton respectfully.

"Belmont Villa? Belmont fiddlestick! Villa indeed, what? three rooms and a garret, I suppose! oh no, *I* don't go to Villas, not I!"

"Would you like to look at the bill, Sir? it is on

that table, and I have promised to try to circulate some."

"Bill, hey, yes, here, is this it? Oh, oh, I see, I see;" and the gruff old man settled himself with spectacles on nose to read the paper which had been offered him. It ran in the usual terms of a "Sale by Auction on the Premises," &c. &c.; and from the quality of the furniture mentioned it might seem to have belonged to people of taste, if not of fortune. Pictures, drawings, a piano, violoncello, &c. &c. were among the articles specified, and at each of these announcements the churlish old man uttered an impatient "Pshaw." Looking up at last, he said,

"Well Mr. Dalton, and who are these blockheads with all their nonsenses?" Dalton smiled, but knowing Mr. Crosby of old, said,

"Their name is Sinclair: Mr. Algernon Sinclair and his family, and I fear they have met with some sad reverses, for I hear the sale is caused by an execution put in by one of their creditors."

At the name of Sinclair Mr. Crosby turned away and looked into the fire, stirred it violently and seemed as if some emotion prevented his immediate reply; in a moment, however, he resumed his usual manner and even with increased tartness said,

"*Algernon* Sinclair indeed, who can wonder at *his* fate with such an absurd name as that. Aris-to-critic I suppose; well, well, an execution, hey? Serve them right.—A large family too, I daresay—*I* never had a

large family." But here the querulous old man paused, and something like a sigh escaped him. Then taking up a catalogue of the sale he left the shop in haste, uttering a brief and somewhat hoarse "Good night."

And now our friend the bookseller laughs and rubs his hands with glee, and desiring "Jonas" to take care of the shop, and call him if he should be wanted, he opened the door which led from the shop, and closing it behind him, found himself in his most snug and comfortable of sitting rooms, where his pretty wife and fine curly headed boy of some three years old hailed his entrance with delight. A bright fire, tea ready, and the kettle sending forth its full puffs of steam, all announced that he had been for some time expected; and now his boy is on his knee; his wife prepares his toast, and he draws from his pocket the new number of Dickens' last work, which is just come in: this is a charming surprise to Mrs. Dalton, she calls him a "dear good man," and they prepare for an hour of unmixed enjoyment, after a day of industry and careful attention to their respective duties.

Meanwhile old Crosby descended the steps from the reading-room, holding his handkerchief to his mouth, and trying in vain to retain any portion of the warmth he had been encouraging by Mr. Dalton's good fire; in fact, he was even more chilled, more cold, more cross than he would have been had he not lingered so long in the enjoyment of its comforts, and he finds it quite needful to hasten his steps, and make the best of his

way to his home, which is at a distance of about half a mile: arrived at last, he opens with a latch key an iron gate, which forms the centre of a long brick wall, and passes through a sort of green, with a flagged path leading straight up to a substantial brick house having two very white stone steps in front, which even in this dirtiest of November days, still look as if they had only just been whitened by the dexterous hands of the housemaid. The knocker too is bright as gold, and though evidently bearing the date of the last century, still looks as new as the day it was first placed there. Another latch key admits the master of this most respectable dwelling into a warm and carpeted hall, with some panels and ornaments, which also tell a tale of the ancient times when these substantial buildings were more common than in these days of lath and plaster and outside appearance. A lamp was burning in this entrance hall, and Mr. Crosby here deposited his hat and over-coat, goloshes and comforter, then turned on the right hand into a sort of study, which to him served as his usual sitting-room: and oh! what a comfortable nice neat room it was, with its crimson cloth curtains now carefully adjusted, its many coloured soft Persian carpet, reminding one of all the pretty blue, crimson, and golden shell sugar plums, which used so to delight our colour-loving, childish eyes. One side of the room is occupied by a book-case of no modern date, with a lattice of the brightest brass before it, enclosing many hundred

well chosen volumes. Yes, and by the bright gleam from the wood fire, one may see such brilliant new bindings, showing that good Mr. Dalton's shop has not been visited in vain; for our old friend likes an amusing tale, when he seats himself by his fire in the evening. His neat tea-table is set, and his arm-chair with slippers and a boot-jack are placed by the fire; and, as he seats himself and holds out his cold hands to warm them, a large tabby cat slowly rouses herself, and stretches out her hind legs as if inclined to measure the length of the rug, then draws herself together, as if trying to see how nearly she can reach the ceiling, and with a faint miaw takes a spring and seats herself without ceremony on the extreme point of her master's knee, close before the fire, and with as much quiet composure as if she had not changed her position for the last month. "Well, so you're come! are you? Who sent for you?" but he strokes her softly, and Pussy purrs merrily: the bell is now rung, and a nice, cheerful, middle-aged housekeeper appears at the summons.

"Oh, I didn't hear you come in, Sir; would you like your tea now?"

"Hey! Yes, of course I should; and, Fairly, bring candles first; I am not an owl, I can't read in the dark!" Fairly laughs as she goes out. "Oh dear! Master is so funny;" and she hastens to bring all that will be wanted. First the candles in such bright old fashioned silver candlesticks; then the kettle and a

silver muffin-plate with the hottest of muffins toasted brown and crisp, and I wonder that it has not been eaten already it looks so tempting ; then another log of wood is added to increase the blaze, and with, " I hope you'll find all things to your liking, Sir," Fairly retires and Mr. Crosby is alone. And what is it that induces him instantly to rise, and leave all these comforts, and once more return to the hall ? Oh, he has left something in his coat-pocket, the bill of the sale, which he brought from Mr. Dalton's ; and with this in his hand, once more he ensconces himself in his arm-chair, and begins to sip his tea and eat his muffin, while he studies the catalogue before him ; and as he considered all its contents, he occasionally made a mark against some article, and grumbled forth such sentences as these : " Nice time for a sale, great hopes they must have of purchasers ! cold and fog, and rain, and dirt,— well, there'll be nobody there, that's one comfort, and things will sell cheap. Ah, CHEAP, well ! I'll go — let's see, let's see, ' A Piano,' I daresay, every fool has a Piano now, however they won't get much for that in this neighbourhood, that's one comfort :" and again the old man smiles, but there is no bitterness in this smile, but more of quiet, sad remembrance, and something like a tear glistens in his eye ; sadly he rests his head upon his hand, his gruff churlishness is thrown aside, and for a few moments his better genius prevails.

Some time passes in contemplation, and in reading :

he always retires early, and the evening is rapidly drawing to its close : the tea-things have been long withdrawn, but as Fairly knows her Master's humour, she has not interrupted the silence, perhaps sleepy doze, in which she finds him each time that she has entered the apartment. At nine o'clock Mr. Crosby rings a silver bell, which has been standing by his side all the evening, and Fairly brings the night candle, and then wishes her master "A very good night," and leaves the room, not on any pretence to dare again intrude herself upon his privacy. Mr. Crosby sat a few moments in perfect stillness, and then, having ascertained that the servants are really gone to their respective rooms, he locks and bolts the door of his study, and opens the doors of the Book-case we have described, and takes down what appears to be a row of well-bound books, but which in reality is an iron front of an iron safe, for papers or other matters, and which is so beautifully painted to represent Hume's History of England, that no one could ever believe it to be formed of such heavy and lasting material. From this iron chest the old man takes out several bags containing money, and places them, one by one, on the table below him ; then carefully descending from the high steps which have been formed by turning over his easy chair, he stands before these his earthly treasures : well will it be for thee, old man, if they prove not to thee an hindrance to the attainment of those heavenly treasures which do not rust or corrupt ! The old

man looks at these bags with tearful eyes; for when he first began to hoard his moneys, all were intended for one he loved too dearly, and now it has become a habit; and he still hoards and hoards, more and more, from year to year. At length recalling his intention in seeking his treasures on this particular evening, he selects one bag which bears in large red figures on its surface £100, and replacing all others, and carefully closing the secret spring, he locked the door of his Book-case, deposited the bag which he had selected in a carpet bag, which he took from a closet under the Book-case, and carrying it in his hand, ascended the stairs to his bedroom, muttering, as he went, "things will be cheap, ah! **very** cheap, no doubt!"





CHAPTER II.

 ND now, having wished Mr. Crosby "Good night," we will leave him to lock himself into his comfortable bedroom, and once more emerging into the street, we will follow the young woman who is at this moment passing by the wall which forms the boundary to his grounds. She is young and active, and, with a basket on her arm, and a loose brown cloak, with ample hood hanging behind, is hurrying through the streets at an unusual pace for a person who is encumbered with pattens, in addition to the burthen we have described. Click clack, click clack, click clack, clicky clack, resounds through the long street, unbroken by any other sound, except the ringing of the last post-bell for the evening, which is heard at intervals, all the distance of that long suburb; at length the pattens reach softer ground, and the click clack is much deadened, no longer affording its exciting music to the now weary pedestrian: she shifts her basket, and gathers her cloak round her, and begins to wish she had "brought an umbrella," for the fog is fast changing

into a regular fall of small soaking rain, and she begins to fear she shall be wet to the skin before she can reach her destination, and then "I'll be bound that ill-mannered grate will have put the fire out, bad cess to it!" However, the weary distance is at length accomplished, and she reaches the little palisade, which separates from the road the house which she is seeking; but it is so dark, that but for the white rails, she would not have been able to see how nearly she had reached the end of her weary walk. She turned in at the large white gate, and then stooped to take off her pattens, saying, "Oh, it's little use thinking of him, but the Masther always hated the sight of them nasty patten marks in the gravel, more by token he was angered, onct wi' me, I well minds, so I'll run no risks of vexing him, God bless him :" and the good-natured creature picked her way along the rough sides of the gravel-walk which led to the House. A stone portico, supported on two round pillars, formed the principal entrance, and to this the young woman directed her steps, as here she could be sheltered from the rain till some one from the house should come to admit her. She rang, however, somewhat timidly, for she never before had ventured to stop at the principal entrance; but the bell was instantly, and as it would seem, gladly attended to, and a light step was heard approaching the door from within. "Honor, is that you?" demanded a young, clear, yet gentle voice. "Indeed then an it's meself, Miss Kate, an I'm en-

tirely kilt wi the wet and cowld, so open the door quickly, and it's meself will tell ye all about it." By this time the door was opened, and a fair young girl of eighteen, or thereabouts, stood within it's shelter, shading with her soft white hand the light which she held so as to save it from extinction by the sudden gust of wind and rain which greeted her arrival.

"Dear good Honor, I'm so glad you've come; but how long you have been kept, and how wet and cold you look; but do not stand here, come into your kitchen, where I have put some sticks to warm you. I have had my tea, but you will find some ready for you."

"Oh Miss Kate, my own sweet darlint Miss Kate, is it yerself that has taken all this thrubble for me, as isn't fit to hold a candle to the likes of ye? the Heav'ns be your bed, and they will for sartain, for niver was yer equal yet!"

"Hush, hush, my good Honor, or I shall think you are quite bewildered with your sorrow and trouble. But now tell me, how are they, my dear, dear ones? How are they bearing this heavy trial, and without me to help and assist them? Is my dear Papa better? and Mamma, does she eat anything? and does she look less sad? Oh Honor! tell me all, for I am indeed in grief and sorrow, more than I can well support."

"Why thin, my dear honoured young lady, I am thankful to tell you that they are all intirely as well as you could expict, and poor Masther is quite and

calm, and the Mistress—well she *do* look pale that's sartain, but they took some of the wine you sent, and I told them you would try to join them to-morrow, after that thief of the world has finished the sale. Ohone, ohone, I can't bear it; oh, Miss, my heart will break; for how can I see ye all, that I love better than my life, deprived of all your comforts: but oh, Miss Kate, let me bide wi ye to the last! I can spin a little, and who knows but the novelty may bring us some money sometimes: but I ask yer pardon, entirely, Miss; it's little that the likes of me can do."

" My dear, good, faithful Honor, you can, and do comfort me, and at all events till this sad business is concluded, I shall be thankful to keep you near me; but as yet I know not what will be my dear Papa's arrangements afterwards: so now, dear Honor, go and get your tea, and I, meanwhile, will finish my preparations for to-morrow." Honor then walked sadly into her kitchen, and there found a small but bright fire, and her little meal ready; for as she said, " Thrubble's niver so hard upon Miss Kate as to prevent her thinking of others." She now takes off the almost dripping cloak, and shakes the straw bonnet, and then carefully wipes it, as she stands before the fire to warm her benumbed fingers. While thus occupied, she raises her head and listens; throws back the rather damp black curls from her face, and by the help of a bright blush looks really pretty, for albeit the nose is a thought too much turned at the point, yet

it only serves more fully to bring into notice the full rich mouth and pearly teeth so commonly found among the Irish peasantry ; her black eyes flash too, as she hears Rory's well-known tap at the little shutter of her window, and the " Whisht ! Rory, is that you ?" is instantly followed by the unbolting of the door, for the sly puss knows that "*Rory it is,*" and she quite longs for a peep at his good kind face ; but she now cautions him not to make a stir, for she says, " It isn't that I mind dear Miss Kate's knowing of your coming, Rory dear, but may be she might think it selfish of me to feel so happy as the sight of ye makes me, this weary night. Oh, Rory, my poor dear Masther ! I feel for him and all the family, and my heart is too full entirely !" By this time Rory is seated, and trying to look as sad as his pretty Honor ; but, though fully sympathizing with her, there is still a slight twinkle of the bright eyes, and an almost smile about the handsome mouth, which show that Rory thinks he can in some measure allay the pain of that dearly-loved and prized one's heart. He listens, however, patiently, and Honor pours out a cup of tea for him, and they look lovingly at each other, and Honor is " quite ashamed " at feeling so comfortable on this sad evening. At last poor Rory can no longer keep his secret, and he draws near his mistress, and takes her hand, and—well no matter. Honor scolds, and Rory laughs, and then takes from his waistcoat pocket a very small leathern purse, from which his large finger

and thumb at last draw themselves out, and display, to Honor's great surprise, two golden sovereigns.

"Ah! I knew you'd be tuck by surprise, me darlint! but they are honestly arnt, and now say the word, Honor dear, and I'll 'buy the ring' and ye shall have another home, where ye'll be loved and cherished, though may be we'll not be able to provide all the comforts which you have had in this blessed house; but I'll do my best, mavourneen! and ye shall nivver have to say, 'Rory takes the dhrop too much;' dearest Honor, tell me all your wishes, and you shall have my heart's blood, if it'll be doing ye good anyhow."

At first the girl listened with evident pleasure; her hand rested confidingly in that of her lover, and she lowered her sweet face, that he might not read her tell-tale eyes too plainly; but a sudden thought induces a change of position, and she throws herself suddenly upon her lover's shoulder.

"Oh Rory, dear Rory, ye knows my heart, and ye needs not for me to tell ye that it's all your own, and none but ye shall ever be my husband, but it must not be yet, dearest Rory! Can I lave them as has nurtured and fed me all my orphan days, and trated me like their own entirely? Can I go and find comforts, and pleasures, and lave them in their thrubble? Ah, ye would'n't wish it! for I should be entirely unworthy of yer love if I could do so!"

Rory clasps the noble girl to his honest heart, and smothering his feelings of sorrow and disappointment,

bursts forth into the strong enthusiastic language of his country, and showers every blessing that heart can imagine upon the dear girl of whom he is so justly proud. When the first mixed feelings had a little passed away, Honor with many blushes—for she is very delicate on the subject of money matters and has much difficulty in bringing her lips to utter the wishes of her heart which have been suddenly excited by the sight of such unaccountable riches as have been just displayed;—the thought however that it must, “just be now or never” prevails, so she bursts forth boldly with a request, which at another moment, she could not have proposed.

“ Dear Rory, what’ll ye do with them two bright golden sovereigns, now that we don’t need that ye proposed to buy wid ‘em? Would ye! oh, would ye be here to-morrow and ‘stow them in some way, upon that dear suffering angel Miss Kate; ohone! an’ they’ve taken her purty desk, and her work-box, and all her things, and put it all in that thief of a cat’logue, and what’ll she do without all her pretty presents, and things? Oh Rory! I’ve saved a very little, and let us see what we can do for her. Will ye, dear?”

Good honest kind Rory stands with tearful eyes, of which he is ashamed?—Why?—but his generous heart fully responds to Honor’s wishes, and with a “God bless ye, Honor, don’t fear but I’ll be here, God willing,” he bent his head, and squeezing poor Honor’s hand, he rushes from the house, and as he strides rapidly down the road, ejaculates “ Oh and is’n’t she a darlint

and an angel ! that she is, and when she is mine may be I shan't have the best wife in the kingdom, let alone old Ireland."

He is gone, and Honor still lingers where he left her, and perhaps a little sigh escapes her as she thinks how she has decided; but it is only for one passing moment, and then she hastily arranges her neat kitchen, and taking her candle goes to seek "Miss Kate." The vestibule is filled with articles prepared for the Sale, and ticketed with little round pieces of paper bearing the marks of "Lot * * * * up to Lot * * * * " and all looks disordered and cheerless; the stair carpets are rolled up, and everything is marked to correspond with the catalogue of the auctioneer. Honor slowly ascends the staircase, and approaches the door of Kate's own pretty sleeping room ; her timid knock rouses poor Kate, who hastily effaces the marks of the sad tears which have at length found vent, and, opening the door, admits her kind and now only companion. Kate's room has been left in its usual state, with the exception of the Lot tickets affixed to all the articles within it; and here, in this neatest of rooms, prepared by the express direction of her dear indulgent parents, poor Kate has passed the last few hours of her stay in her once happy home.

" Well, my good Honor, do you want me now ? I hope you have had your tea ? "

" Oh yes, Miss, thanks to yer goodness, but I am vexed to think I've left ye so long by yer self."

"Never mind that, my good girl, and now tell me all that you have done since we parted this afternoon."

"Why, Miss, I set out with an aching heart to find my dear Masther and Misthress at the lodgings, and I thought I'd niver get there; for ye see, I was so impatient like, and I thought may be they'd not have cared to prepare their dinner in a strange place; so I just hurried on for dear life, and at last I found the street, and inquired as ye told me at Mrs. Crump's the green grocer, for Mr. Eveleegh's apartments; and she says, 'Oh, I doubt ye mane Mr. Eveleigh's, as was; for some strangers is come there now.' So I thought it was all right, and I told her yes, I believed they was the ex-picted ones, and she showed me the way to a red brick house, that looked as if it had once belonged to some quality, and she tould me it was let now in rooms, and there she left me; and so I knocked at the door, and who should be accidently in the passage but Masther Charles? for though I knocked once or twice I suppose Masther Charles was busy or something, for he did not open the door directly; and when he seen me, he says, 'Oh, is it you, dear Honor?' O what a purty way that dear boy spakes in, he has always a 'dear' or a 'good' or some kind word for poor Honor. Well, Masther Charles shows me in, and up a wide old staircase, and then up still higher; and, thinks I, is it in Hiv'n intirely that they've had the manners to put the likes of them? I can't but say I was grieved to think the Masther should have so much trouble every

time he wished to take the breath of air. However I didn't say aught, and all was forgotten when I seen them; the dear little ones flew to me and clung round my neck, but I put them by, and made my humble curtsey to my dear kind lady; so she told me to come in, and shut the door; and thin I put down my basket, and I says 'Miss Kate sends ye some things, Ma'am, and she hopes you and Masther will take some wine, and she gives her love, and she will come to you after all is settled, and hopes ye'r all comfortable.'—But oh! dear Miss Kate, I couldn't bear it, and they all looking so sorrowful; and my foolish tares, which, bad manners to them, always come when they're not wanted, flowed down my cheeks, and I couldn't see at all at all: however I conkered 'em, and I stooped down and opened the basket, and took out the cold chicken you sent, and the bottle o' wine, and thin I spread out the white cloth and tried to give it a genteel air. My dear Mistress looked on smiling, wid her own sweet kindly smile; och! I wonder how any one can have the heart to harm her, God bless her! Well anyhow I made it all look comfortable, an' I think the two little ones was hungry, tho' they didn't say so, and I'd a hard matter to keep back thim fools of tares when I heard them tell Masther that they didn't 'wish the the chicken' but 'only a bit of the ham' and a 'potato.' Ah, Miss Kate, you've schooled 'em well, and they are precious lambs in the sight of their Maker! Well, I was glad to see yer Papa smile, and he said in his

grand way, ‘ Thankee, Honor, thankee, all very nicely done, but we will not keep ye, for it’ll be getting dark, so leave us now, and tell Miss Kate we are all well, and shall hope to see her to-morrow;’ so I asked my Misthress if she had anything to send, an’ she told me to take back the things they had yesterday; and I wint into the passage and packed my basket, for somehow I thought Masther was unaisy like, at my seeing what a sad reverse it all was; so I just wint in and made my curtsey to them all and set out on my way home, but it was nearly dark and I missed my way, and got low and tired like, and I couldn’t see a dacent person to ask the question which way would I be going, and I thought I’d niver get home. Well at last I found myself all right, for I camed out just opposite Mr. Dalton’s shop, and Jonas was putting up the shutters as the clock struck half past something, which I knew must be eight, for that’s his hour for shutting up the shop; and so I tuck heart and got home quite safe, and right glad I was to find myself under the portical, and to hear your own sweet voice, Miss Kate.”

Poor Kate with silence and in sadness, listened to this first report of her dear parents’ state since their separation on the preceding morning, when, with much difficulty, she had prevailed on them to leave her with Honor to finish the arrangements for the sale, and to attend to anything which might arise, but she was of course to seclude herself during the hours of the auction, and to join her parents as soon as it was concluded.

She now told Honor that she felt tired, and requesting to be called at seven o'clock on the following morning, she dismissed the kind hearted girl, and locking the door of the room approached the fire, and leaning on the mantelpiece indulged for a few moments in the sad thoughts which the account of the dearly loved party had occasioned her; but not long did sadness prevail, for she thought, "is not this sad trial sent from 'a father's hand,' and can he err in his dealings with his children?" and deep and loving thoughts of Him in whom she trusted brought sweet peace to her heart; and she knelt down in her accustomed place beside her little couch, and prayed for strength to meet the trials which she saw approaching; she asked not for their removal, but for submission to the will of Him who sent them; and then she arose, calm and cheerful; nor did she suffer herself to think of anything which would tend to soften or excite her feelings. She felt comfort in the reflection that she should be able to assist and support those she loved so dearly; and for some time she slept peacefully.



CHAPTER III.

E must now take a slight retrospective glance, and give some account of the causes which had given rise to the troubles and difficulties of the family we have thus hastily introduced to our readers. Mr. Sinclair was the youngest of three sons of a gentleman of fortune and consideration in one of the northern counties; his father and elder brother were devoted to field sports, and spent most of their time in the field or on the race course, leading a thoughtless careless life, well pleased that the young and gentle Mrs. Sinclair should be too fond of her nursery and its little petted inmates to claim much of their time and attention. Mr. Sinclair had been twice married, and Henry, or as he was generally called, Harry, was the son of his first wife; and as Mr. Sinclair remained a widower for some years, there was much difference in age between Harry and the two little boys who now claimed their young mother's care. The second Mrs. Sinclair was young and portionless, and Mr. Sinclair, in giving her a comfortable home and handsome appointments, thought he had fulfilled

all that was required of him, and he made no provision for these younger children, but trusted to giving them the means of following a profession worthy of their station in life, when they should attain the proper age. Thus they were left to the guidance and teaching of their gentle mother, who, though well qualified to give them a taste for all the refinements and elegancies of life, and to lead them into a love for all that was truly good and excellent, was little calculated to give to their minds that vigour and firmness which in the manly character is so indispensable. Ernest, the eldest of her two boys, soon evinced a most decided contempt for all petticoat government; and having wearied the strength and spirits of both "Nurse" and "Mamma," was one morning sent off to a regular boy's school, much to his delight; while little Algernon, in his soft vest of green velvet, was left to meet all the petting and indulgence of his quiet loving mother. And well did she her duty as far as she understood what was needful, instructing him in every religious and moral duty, and as he grew older, gladly cultivating in him a love for those arts to which she was herself devoted; and never did she feel so pleased, as when seated at her drawing table, with all her elegant appliances around her, she worked in silence at some lovely miniature of her darling boy; or copied in oils some of the really fine paintings which adorned the mansion of which she was the mistress. On these occasions, the little Algernon with his drawing book and pencil, was only too happy to

stand by her side and try to copy "dear Mamma," and to see "dear Mamma" smile and look pleased when he had perpetrated some cat with a dog's head, or haystack with a chimney on the top of it. Thus as time went on a love of drawing was instilled, and as his mother was also passionately fond of music, little Algernon was soon instructed in this art also: at six years old he could play many airs both on the piano and violin; and when, at the age of eight, he was seen standing on a raised step by his Mamma's side, and playing easy accompaniments to her beautiful piano movements, even the rough Mr. Sinclair would clap him on the shoulder, and pronounce him "quite a prodigy!" In this way time fled, and Algernon was still under his mother's sole care, when, at fourteen, he was called upon to soothe and comfort her through a long and painful illness which terminated in rapid consumption; so that although Mr. Sinclair had said that it was high time for Algy to go to school, it was impossible to remove him while his precious mother so much required his presence; and a tutor was therefore provided for him. About this time Ernest left school, and as he had shown for some time a great desire to go abroad, Mr. Sinclair procured a Cadetship for him; and giving him his outfit, and having lodged £500 for him in a banker's hands at Calcutta, he saw him safely on board an East Indiaman; and telling him that when next they met he should expect to see him "rolling in riches," he tried to smile as he shook him by

the hand for the last time; but as the smile proved a failure, he hastily brushed from his eyes some "fog" or "rain" which blinded him, and announcing that he had "a horrid cold," rushed from the deck, and quickly ensconced himself in the boat which awaited his return to the shore; and the parting was over.

We will now pass by four or five years of Algernon Sinclair's life, only stating that he lost his dear mother when he was about fifteen, and that he then was permitted to keep his tutor with him, as his father, who hated all trouble, rather liked Mr. Upton the tutor, and thought the house would be dull without him and Algy. So time passed, and at eighteen Mr. Sinclair told Algernon that it was now quite time that he should decide on his future course; and as his education had not prepared him either for the church or any other learned profession, it remained only for him to decide whether his destination should be the army or the navy, as he knew of no other means of providing for him. Algernon immediately decided on the former, and his father lost no time in securing for him a commission in a regiment. Shortly afterwards this regiment was ordered to Ireland, and remained there for some years. We will not follow Algernon all through his military career, suffice it that at five-and-twenty he was addressed as "Captain Sinclair," and that shortly after he married a very lovely and accomplished girl who resided with her widowed mother in —— where the regiment had been stationed for about two

years ; and though his bride had little save her beauty and bright virtues to bring with her as her dowry, yet with care and frugality they hoped to do well, and they were truly happy. Emily was as fond of the arts as her husband could wish ; he would hang over her chair and watch the progress of those fairy fingers, while painting or copying some of " dear Algernon's sweet drawings," and her husband's violoncello " is such a support," and he " does play so sweetly," that Algernon is quite enticed into passing almost all his time with her ; and his heart returns to the time when his dear, his beloved mother, was his companion and the encouraging instructress of her children. For a few years it may be believed the Sinclairs were happy people, devoted to each other, and to amusements harmless in themselves when kept under due restraint, but sapping the energies and softening those powers of the mind which would lead to active exertion. At the end of two years the birth of a little daughter was hailed with the truest joy and gratitude, and the little Kate now became the charm of their existence ; but when another, and yet another, little claimant on his care hailed him by the name of father, poor Algernon became in some measure alarmed for the future means of providing for so large a family ; and servants were one by one dismissed, Emily was obliged to be much in her nursery, and anxieties crept into the hearts of both the parents.

It was at this time that the services of a middle aged Irish woman, of the name of Judith Cassidy, were ac-

cepted as "servant of all work, and Captain and Mrs. Sinclair retired into a very small cottage, determining to live for each other only, and to give up all visiting and other causes of expense. Kate was now six years old, and as Mrs. Sinclair had three younger children, it was needful to consider Kate as "quite grown up;" thus at an early age she was accustomed to be useful, and considerate of the comforts of others. Judith Cassidy was a widow, and as she had a little girl to provide for, she was truly glad to accept Mrs. Sinclair's offer, and to come with her little "Honor" to take the entire superintendence and business of the already large family. Honor was clever, and her mother made her useful in many ways; for though only ten years old, she was quick and shrewd, in short, a true specimen of an Irish woman in miniature. Active and lively, Mrs. Sinclair found her eminently useful in assisting to amuse the younger children, while she was herself engaged in other affairs; the little menage of her cottage required much forethought and arrangement to make their present mode of life at all tolerable to her fastidious, though ever kind and affectionate husband; her evenings she still devoted to him, and as they had retained their piano and his violoncello, they passed many very happy hours, while the little ones slept in safety, guarded by the faithful, kind Irish woman and her little girl. Thus two years glided by, and as in each other they ever found companionship and sympathy, the little trials produced by straitened

circumstances were but little felt, and for each other's sake were quietly, and even nobly borne. Algernon was unwilling to apply to his father or brother for assistance, lest they should ridicule his somewhat romantic and imprudent marriage ; and this induced him also to withhold from all his other friends in England the knowledge of his difficulties. At the end of about three years, Captain Sinclair was unexpectedly relieved from this state of almost poverty, as at that time old Mr. Sinclair died, and Algernon, to his great surprise, found that his father had left the greater part of his private property to himself and Ernest, who was still in India. This was indeed a happy occurrence for the poor Sinclairs ; and Algernon immediately decided on selling his commission, and then returning to England to seek some comfortable and eligible home near London ; as he thought he should there find it more easy to give his children a good education, and to provide himself with the means of indulging his favourite tastes and pursuits. About this time, too, a maiden aunt of Mrs. Sinclair's died, and left her a considerable sum of money ; so that, compared with their former difficulties, they might now be considered affluent, and they imagined that £800 a year would secure for them every comfort and even luxury. As soon as possible, then, they left Ireland, taking with them poor Judith and little Honor ; and very soon Mr. Sinclair took, on a long lease, a really pretty villa, as it was called, near Brompton, furnishing it handsomely, and adding

many comforts; a bath room, a pretty conservatory, and many other almost luxuries; and here for some years they were very happy. Numerous servants, and a most efficient governess, now relieved Mrs. Sinclair from all necessity for exertion, and she was only too happy to pass the whole of her time in seeking to conduce to the amusement of her husband; and a life of ease and self-indulgence ill prepared them for the reverse of fortune which awaited them. His affairs were left too much to the care of others, and the income, which both had thought so ample, scarcely provided all the comforts and indulgences which they now required. Charles was now at an age when it was necessary to send him to school; and here was a new source of expense. Kate's excellent governess was fully competent to instruct the girls in all useful matters, but it was proper that Kate should have also the advantage of masters for music, drawing, and languages; thus, year by year, expenses grew, but the income did not increase. A clear investigation of their expenditure had convinced Mr. Sinclair that they were living beyond their means, though with care and some retrenchment he believed they might free themselves from embarrassment: yet it was difficult to determine which should be the luxury to be dispensed with. Still trifling efforts were made; Kate was sixteen, so the governess was dismissed, and Kate undertook to teach sweet Emily and the little "pet Rosa" herself: one or two servants were also dispensed with,

and Honor found herself exalted to the situation of principal housemaid, though, as she still remained as "Irish" in her speech as ever, Mrs. Sinclair did not like her to be as much with the young ladies as poor Honor wished, and there was still a young English servant retained to wait on "Miss Kate" and attend to the school-room. By all these little arrangements Mr. Sinclair found, at the end of a year and a half, that he had so far regulated his expenses as to bring his debts within compass, and he hoped in a short time to be once more free from pecuniary difficulties, more painful than any others to an honourable mind. In all their anxieties Kate was allowed the high privilege of their entire confidence; and, young as she was, she was able frequently to aid them by her judicious suggestions; and by her constant exertions she prevented any additional trouble or fatigue from falling on her dearly loved mother, who was at this time in a very delicate state of health; and well was she rewarded for all her excellent conduct, when she received from her dear parents their smiles of approbation, and saw them deriving comfort from her efforts.

But a heavy blow awaited this loving family. Mr. Sinclair had placed the whole of his property in the hands of a banker, who had always been considered as a man of the highest probity and integrity, but who had been, for some time past suspected as rather a speculator; and one morning, at breakfast, a letter was put into Mr. Sinclair's hand, from his solicitor, in

which, in very guarded terms, he spoke of "rumours" which were afloat on the subject of embarrassments which had occurred to this banker, from the loss of some railway shares, and advising his friend Mr. Sinclair to use exertions instantly to rescue his property. The advice came too late; every thing was done that was possible, but the banker's name appeared the next day in the Gazette, and the poor Sinclairs were irretrievably ruined; as not only had they lost the whole of their property, but those debts which Algernon was really striving and intending to liquidate speedily, were still in array against him, and must swallow up nearly the whole that he could realize by the sale of every thing which belonged to him.

We will not dwell upon the sad scene of distress which followed. A sale was instantly decided upon; servants were dismissed, and all but the faithful Honor left them. It was now that the firmness and energy of Kate's character were first fully developed; she soothed, comforted, and advised by turns, and devoted all the energies of her young and active mind to assist her parents in forming and deciding on their future plans. She reminded her father that he had a firm, though somewhat humble friend, an artist, whom he had once saved from great difficulties, and of his having once taken them to see a curious old house of his which was then uninhabited; and she said she felt assured that if it were still untenanted Mr. Eveleigh

would lend it to them until they could make some better and more comfortable arrangement. As this really did seem probable, and as Mr. Sinclair could think of no other plan by which he could ensure a temporary home for the dear ones around him, he wrote to his friend immediately, and very soon received a most kind and almost affectionate letter from Mr. Eveleigh, in which he told him, however, that he was sorry to say all the lower part of the house in question was at present occupied ; the ground floor had been long the residence of his maiden aunt, a Scotch lady, and her servant ; the first floor was also let, but he believed for a short time only ; there was still vacant the " Studio," as he used to call it, and one or two small rooms on the same floor, and if in any way, or for any purpose, Mr. Sinclair could use them, he was more than welcome to take them into his possession. This letter contained many kind expressions of regret for Mr. Sinclair's misfortunes, and an earnest wish that the writer could in the smallest degree contribute to the comfort or advantage of his former benefactor.

After much deliberation, it was determined that the family should all find shelter in the poor abode thus kindly offered, and seclude themselves from all observation till the sale had taken place, and some plan could be decided upon for their future subsistence. With a sad heart poor Kate made all the needful preparations for their departure. Nothing was omitted, and the little ones were dismissed with very many cautions to

be considerate, and give *no* trouble; and they, with trembling eagerness, had assured dear "Katie" that they would "try to take care of dear papa and mamma" till she could once more be by their side; and then Honor came, and led them down to join their parents, telling them, as they for the last time descended the stairs, that "sure she would come and see them to-morrow, and they would all be happy as birds;" but the poor girl had no joy in her voice, and the wondering children could not think why everybody seemed so unhappy. Poor Kate watched the receding carriage which conveyed her sad and sorrowing parents from their once happy home, and when they were really gone, she returned to her own little bedroom, and closing the door, knelt for a long time in silent prayer to that heavenly Father who doth not willingly afflict his children, and she felt that doubtless this was a needful trial of their faith. She humbly prayed for strength and patience to meet "her Father's" will in this and every trial, and arose strengthened and refreshed, and calling the faithful Honor to assist her, employed herself busily and usefully all that day and the next in preparing everything that was necessary for the sale, which was to take place on the morning of the third day from the time of the departure of her parents.



CHAPTER IV.

JT was still dark, and a thick cold misty rain was falling, rendering every thing, both within and without the house, damp and cheerless, when Honor in obedience to her young lady's directions on the preceding evening, approached with gentle steps her chamber door, hoping she might yet be sleeping, and in such case determining not to awaken her. She listened attentively for a moment, when, on hearing Kate in her cheerful voice demand who was waiting, she entered and said, "It's *me*, Miss Kate, and I've taken the liberty of bringing ye some warm tay, and a little thrifl of toast, for it's kilt yed be entirely wid the cowld of this dark-onchristian-like morning, fetchin ye up before there's a light in the hivens, when its pouring the drizzling rain is, and there's fog enough to choke ye; so now I hope, my dear young lady, ye'll try to ate a bit, and kep the cowld from yer heart." Kate rewarded her kind attendant with a smile, and readily accepted the offered refreshment, for she felt how very needful it was to use every means of strengthening herself, and

preparing for the painful duties which she knew awaited her. Whilst she sat up in her little bed to take her tea, Honor lighted the fire, and its cheerful blaze soon dissipated the gloom and darkness of the chamber, and sent a feeling of almost cheerfulness into the hearts of its young inmates. While Honor was thus occupied, Kate said, "How very kind and thoughtful it was of you, my good Honor, to think of bringing me this nice breakfast, and without direction too ! it was really very considerate of you :" and Kate's kind face was turned towards her young attendant with an approving smile.

Honor paused in her employment ; then, standing up, with her bright sunny face glowing with enthusiasm, she said, "Oh, Miss Kate, is it *kind* ye think me ? And whare will I have larnt sich a lesson, but only from yer own sweet self ? Who was it that cam to *my* bedside, an I thin but a bit of a girl in the house, and stood by me, an comforted me in my thrubble and sorrow, the saddest day of all my life, and spoke the swate words of Christian consolation ? An when ye seen me comforted like, ye brought me the warm wine and the bit o' bread, and niver left me, till ye seen me sink into the quite sleep, and for a time forget my dear kind mother, that had just been taken to glory ! May the Lord rest her soul in hivvin ! Amen. Shure I'd be worse nor the bastes of the 'arth, could I iver forgit that day, or forsake ye, if I could be allowed the blessing of being near ye ! "

This sudden burst of gratitude, so tenderly expressed, for a trifling kindness, which had long since passed from Kate's memory, occasioned her some emotion ; but thinking it better to avoid any further excitement of her feelings, at a moment when she required all her firmness and energy, she gently dismissed Honor, telling her that she must now go and get her own breakfast, as doubtless there would be some arrivals of people wishing to inspect the furniture, as soon as it was sufficiently light for them to do so. Honor therefore departed, and Kate having hastily made her morning toilet, quietly seated herself, and sought by reading and prayer, to fit herself for the trials of the coming day. She then wrote to her dear parents, assuring them that she was well, and cheerful, and quite equal to all her duties, &c. &c. At nine o'clock Honor came to tell her that a gentleman wished to speak to her in the library. She instantly obeyed the summons, and to her great and pleased surprise, found Mr. Pleydell, her father's solicitor, waiting to receive her. He came forward with a calm and business-like manner, and assumed as much as possible his usual demeanour and address ; bowed to Miss Sinclair, and asked for her family ; but he was evidently agitated, shocked at the state of the house, and pained at beholding the sad change which had taken place since he had last been seated by Mr. Sinclair's side in that once comfortable room. Mr. Pleydell was a very worthy, kind-hearted man, and it was with much feeling that

he explained to Kate that, but for his unavoidable absence, occasioned by business which had detained him in Ireland, he should have before offered his services in the arrangement of Mr. Sinclair's affairs. And he now begged her to allow him as a friend to make himself useful in any way that would most relieve her from fatigue and trouble. Kate thankfully accepted this kind offer, and explained to Mr. Pleydell, that in consequence of her dear mother's great indisposition, she had prevailed on her father to accompany her to their lodgings, and to allow her and a servant to remain in the house, in case her presence should be necessary : but she added, " I do not intend to leave my room during the time of the sale. And I really shall feel much obliged if you will stay here for a few hours, and release me from responsibility."

" That I will do with the greatest pleasure, my dear young lady, and I hope I shall hear that you are taking care of yourself, and avoiding all unnecessary fatigue, for you look sadly pale and worn.

At parting, Mr. Pleydell offered his hand to Kate, and she gratefully returned its kind and friendly pressure, for her little interview with him had greatly cheered and comforted her, and she returned to her room with a heart lightened of much of its anxiety. On the stairs she passed a singular looking old gentleman ; he was dressed in a brown great coat, with a great deal of velvet collar and cuff, and an immense amount of comforter and collar about his throat : he

had a gold headed stick in his hand, and a hat which was rather lower in the crown and broader in the brim than was generally worn by gentlemen even of his age; his hair which was of silvery whiteness, and of unusual length, fell in soft curls, and partially concealed his still fine contour and features; he was most scrupulously neat, and having laid aside his goloshes at the entrance door, his shoes were bright and shining as when they had been placed by the fire of his morning room; his step was slow and his head bent as if in painful thought, but on hearing Kate's light step on the stairs behind him he turned, and looking at her earnestly with his dark bright eagle eyes, he said, "Oh! Miss Sinclair, I suppose? I am not an intruder here, young lady, hey? I suppose I can see this *Villa*, hey? can't I? His rough voice and short abrupt manner alarmed poor Kate, and her before pale cheeks were lighted by a sudden flush of crimson, as she listened to the churlish stranger's address; yet no feeling of anger or hasty pride dictated her answer, she saw and felt in an instant, that albeit rough in manner, this was a gentleman, and one whose years demanded respect; and allowance was instantly made in her candid mind for his defects of manner: kindly assuring him therefore that he was quite at liberty to see any part of the house, and calling Honor who was in the vestibule below, she told her to accompany the stranger, and passed on to her own little room.

The old gentleman however gazed after her, and

uttered some short and apparently cross and rough remark, which affronted Honor most thoroughly, and it was with a hasty step and flashing eye that she brushed by him in order to open the door of the first room at the right hand on the landing: this was a very nice and comfortably arranged sleeping apartment, and had a dressing room within. Every thing was good and handsome of its kind, but even the churlish Mr. Crosby did not detect aught that bespoke a mere idle taste for luxury or expenditure; he staid not long however here, and silently he followed Honor as she preceded him from room to room, and waited while he from time to time marked the catalogue which he held in his hand. This silence in some measure tended to allay poor Honor's too hasty anger, and "afther all," thought she, "p'raps I might mistake his intintion, for he's likely to be a good purchaser any how." They now proceeded down a light passage leading from the principal sleeping apartments, at the end of which Honor threw open a door, but it was more than her kind heart could bear, to see this room approached by strangers' steps, and on such an errand; it was the room which had always been known as "the nursery," and here in their two little snow white beds, she had been used each night to gaze on the loved faces of the two sweet darlings who were so very dear to her, and now as she thought "perhaps they will not have where to lay their sweet innocent heads," the thought quite overpowered her, and covering her face with her hands, regardless of the pre-

sence of the rough stranger, she burst forth in the language of her country, and in a sort of wailing voice she said, "Ochone thin my precious ones, you're gone ! and the stranger will take possession, and its yer home that'll be rendered dissolute, Ochone ! Ochone !" and the sobs which impeded further utterance gave evidence of the strong affection and sorrow which had occasioned this passionate outbreak of feeling.

For a few moments her companion was silent, only ejaculating an occasional "Pshaw" "Ridiculous" "Absurd," and walking hastily to the window he pretended to be looking out at the view ; perhaps he particularly admired and liked a murky atmosphere, and thought the thick yellow fog quite suitable to the occasion, for he did not turn his head for some time ; he felt it cold too, at all events, for his handkerchief was more than once in requisition. However that might be, he spoke in his usual churlish gruff voice when he said, "Come, come, foolish girl ! don't cry, don't make a scene, for *I hate* all scenes. What, hey ? you liked these foolish people, I suppose, hey ?"

Poor Honor checked her tears and said, "Ah ! is it *liked*, ye ask ? Ay, may be, I did, but I love thim now in my heart's core, so now don't be thrubbling me wid the questions ; for I'm ready and able to attind ye, and I ask yer pardon intirely, for I'm always sadly bothered with thim tazing tares."

All this time Honor was leading him as quickly as possible from the scene of her distress, and conduct-

ing him up another flight of stairs where several inferior rooms were passed without remark ; till at the farthest corner of the house, as far removed as possible from the rooms occupied by the family, she suddenly turned round and said, “ In here, Sir, plaze, this is Masther Charles’s own workshop, an’ I thought as ye seemed curious like, p’raps ye might like to see some of his ingenuity.”

The room they entered was a small one, and lighted from above by a skylight ; it was evidently the favourite resort of some young and ingenious boy, who in his leisure hours devoted his time to mechanical and even scientific pursuits. An electrical machine, a turning lathe, an apparatus for chemical experiments ; and a carpenter’s bench with tools formed some of the contents of this room, which bore on its door a large white placard inscribed, “ Charles’s Den ; none admitted here except on particular business.” Again Honor’s courage had nearly failed her, but she made a sudden dart at the card on the door, and hastily tearing it down pushed it into her pocket ; hoping it had escaped the stranger’s notice, for, as she afterwards said, “ I left it there unknownst, bad manners to me, that I’d let the stranger see the-dear boy’s little droll ways.” She need not however have given herself this trouble, for Mr. Crosby’s eagle eye had seen and read the inscription ; and again he had found it “ very cold.” At this moment Honor was loudly called, but she would not hear till she had exhibited more than one

pretty specimen of Charles's skill in the use of his little turning lathe; a pretty box which she took from her pocket, and which she said was a present to her from "Masther Charles," and a little set of unfinished Chessmen which were intended for his mother, but being left in a box with other matters bore the fatal *lot* mark, were all she could find; and on hearing herself again called she asked Mr. Crosby if he could find his way down stairs, as she must "run for dear life," and left him alone to inspect whatever else he might deem worthy of notice. He stood some time in silent contemplation, and a heavy sigh escaped him; but rousing himself by a sudden effort he denounced himself as "an old fool, ridiculous and childish," and hastily left the room, muttering as he went "Oh! ah! yes! all right I dare say, but why do people indulge their children in all their whims in this way? Nonsense! nonsense!"

Having by this time reached the first landing place, he looked about and seeing a door partly open, he said, "I don't think I saw that room just now, let's see, let's see;" and with the end of his walking stick he pushed the door in question back to its farthest limits; but to his great surprise he saw that it was not prepared for the inspection of the public, like the other parts of the house, but bore every mark of being occupied as usual by some member of the family. A bright fire burnt in the grate, and on the rug before it lay a beautiful small Italian greyhound; a pretty writing table was drawn

up close to the fire, and by its side was placed a little ornamental chair of light material. An elegantly furnished French bed stood on the furthest side of the room, and a pretty small patterned Brussels carpet covered the floor; the walls were papered with a white watered paper and a small gold moulding ran round the top of the room next the ceiling; some clever drawings in water colours, books in a small chiffonier, and many other useful and ornamental appointments gave to this room a remarkable air of comfort, and excited much curiosity in the mind of its intruding visitor; and when Kate's silvery voice was heard speaking in a low tone to Honor, and immediately followed by her entering the room, and walking forward to her writing table without perceiving that her apartment was pre-occupied, the old gentleman felt quite abashed at his intrusion, and knew not how to call her attention to his presence without startling her; in a moment however she looked up, and seeing a stranger felt inclined to retrace her steps and leave the room; but Mr. Crosby said with some warmth, "Young lady, I beg your pardon, I ought not to be here," and bowing with really polite and gentlemanly courtesy, he left the room.—This would be an excellent opportunity for describing our young heroine's appearance, but as no two persons agree as to what is pleasing, pretty, or even prepossessing, we dismiss the subject and leave to each and every one of our readers our free permission to paint the portrait in any colours

that may best please his or her fancy and imagination ; suffice it, that she was fair and gentle, and that her countenance bore the impress of the mind within, in beauty whose source could not be mistaken.

It was now ten o'clock, and Mr. Partles the auctioneer was taking his seat upon a raised sort of platform at the end of the dining-room, which, being large and commodious, had been selected for the auction-room. Mr Partles was fat, and rather short, with a thick husky voice and bustling manner ; he wore on the present occasion a blue coat, with a great deal of white about his throat ; his collars came very high on his cheek, and his hair, which was iron grey, was brushed so as to add as much as possible to his altitude ; and, as if to prevent its ever falling into its natural place, Mr. Partles constantly pushed his fingers through it, and forced it to stand erect, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." Mr. Partles called about him too in a tone of authority, and directed every body with an air of almost magisterial importance ; his hammer was laid by his side, and one of his men stood by him to obey every nod of the great man of the day.

In one corner of the room, in full view of Mr. Partles, but as much as possible concealed from the observation of all others, sat a thin pale woman in a scanty suit of dingy well worn black, with a small pinched up bonnet, over which was thrown a rusty black veil, she wore large gloves of black cloth, and wide shoes with dirty white stockings : and Honor remarked,

" What did she come for to such a house as that, at all? — if she wanted to furnish her house, shure it would not be *here* she'd meet wid a chimney corner."

Well, there she sat however, and greatly was Honor's surprise increased, when she saw Mr. Crosby beckon to her, and take her aside into a dark corner of the room to talk as it seemed quite " confidenshell like." However she had no time for much speculation just then, for who should come into the sale-room but Rory, her own handsome Rory, with his bright cheeks and coal black hair, dressed in his "Sunday best" too, and with a smart yellow silk neckerchief round his throat: as he passed Honor he gave her a sly look, and said "The top of the morning to ye, Miss Honor, ye see I've kept my tryst;" and he contrived to give her a peep at the little purse, and then with a caper he dashed by her and took his seat as near as possible to the auctioneer, who was just "calling the attention of the ladies and gentlemen" before him. The room filled fast, and despite the fog and cold without, it soon became close and warm in the well packed auction-room. More people, and more arrived, and some from idleness, others from curiosity, crowded and pushed, and talked, and speculated, and in a lively manner represented the "sale going" public of the day. We will not follow Mr. Parties through the whole of his day's bustle and fatigue, but will content our readers with telling them, that the rumours afloat in the crowd were, that "things were selling well" and "that

everything was too dear for *them*." Be that as it might Mr. Partles declared that "it was a shame, that he was giving away the goods of his employer" and that "everything he sold was indeed a bargain." The little woman in black who rejoiced in the name of Mrs. Bundy, bought "everything" as Rory told Honor, "what could she be thinking on, the craythur, and where would she be getting the money to pay for it all?"

At last poor Kate's little work box was placed before the auctioneer; "Lot 105," a beautiful inlaid box, intended for a lady's work box. Rory started forward, and was on the point of offering all he had in the wide world for that blessed box ; but Honor held him back. "Whisht, ye'll get it cheap, wait a bit, for its mostly men they are, an' they'll not be wanting the bit work box." And Honor was right, for as the wives and daughters of the purchasers were absent, they did not of course tease their "good men" to buy such "easily done without" articles, and after a few biddings, Rory was declared the happy owner of the box, at "the price, the low price," of £1 10s. and it was as instantly taken possession of by Rory as if he had been a young lady of fourteen, with her first prize at school. He whispered to Mr. Partles that he was "quite intirely obleeged to him," and that he should "like to pay for it directly if he pleased;" but to his surprise Mr. Partles told him, in his grandest manner, "that he was astonished at his intruding his petty

affairs at such a moment" and that he must "set down! and not interrupt the sale." Poor Rory hid his diminished head, and felt quite ashamed of himself, and very angry indeed with that rude spaldeen Mr. Partles.





CHAPTER V.



LL day, all day, poor Kate listened to the sounds below, so fraught with care and sorrow to her young and affectionate heart; the strange voices, the occasional burst of rude laughter, the auctioneer's husky voice, the sound of his hammer, followed by the word "gone" brought forcibly before her the sad reality, that in a few more hours all would be dispersed, and all the comforts by which she was surrounded must, by strangers' hands be taken to adorn and beautify dwellings she might never see; while her dear dear parents would be without the necessities for their daily use or comfort. At times her head sunk upon her breast, and she wept in silence; then rousing herself, she would blush at her repining spirit, and feel that her trust was placed in One who could, and doubtless would order all things for their good. She prayed earnestly for strength to meet this painful trial. From time to time Mr. Pleydell sent to ask to speak to her, sometimes merely from the kind wish of cheering her; and in this he really succeeded beyond his expectations, as he

found Kate so easily led to hope, so anxious to throw aside her more selfish regrets, and so grateful for the smallest kindness, that he had no difficult task in turning her thoughts to subjects on which she could dwell without pain; he kindly insisted on her taking some needful refreshment, and then induced her to promise to go on the following morning to join her parents, assuring her that he would remain in the house all day, to direct Honor in the discharge of her duties, and to make every needful arrangement with the auctioneer; adding "and now, my dear Miss Sinclair, will you tell me how I may best assist you when this sale is completed; I will if you please act as your father's agent, and use my best endeavours in the arrangement of his affairs; but this must indeed be as a *friend*, for in no other way can I offer my services;—no thanks, no thanks, I beg;" and the kind hearted man escaped as quickly as possible, that he might avoid the expression of gratitude which already beamed in the sweet face before him. Kate was in truth most glad to be released from her present painful situation, now that she felt she could leave her father's affairs in such safe hands; but she despatched a note to him, to ask him whether he would be *satisfied* with such an arrangement, and requesting that Charles might come in the morning to accompany her in her little journey. This done, Kate called Honor to assist her in putting up such articles of clothing and bed linen as she had retained for their use, and added such few stores as remained in the

house ; feeling assured they should find much difficulty in procuring even the commonest necessities of life : and now a question arose as to what was to become of poor Fido, her favourite Italian greyhound. Honor in vain suggested " Share it will be all the comfort in life to the little ones," and " it will not be much the crature will thrubble ye, Miss, for he'll be under my care intirely :" for Kate felt that it would, perhaps, occasion some inconvenience to all in the small apartments they would occupy, and she decided on sending Honor with it to Mrs. Dalton, the wife of the book-seller, asking her to take charge of it until she could decide on some other plan. Having then caressed her little favourite and given Honor all needful directions, she wrote a little note to Mrs. Dalton, who had shewn a gentle kind interest in their distress, and despatched Honor, with Fido following her ; and then, having fastened the door, she returned to her room and occupied herself busily. Honor meanwhile pursued her way to the street in which Mr. Dalton lived, and Fido, who had for some days been living in enforced seclusion, now darted from place to place with the most violent energy of delight ; round and round Honor he frisked, now between her feet, now up to her shoulder, now gracefully springing forward, then returning to kiss the hand which hung by her side. " Down, down, Fido ; shure ye'r an ungrateful unmanerly baste, to make yerself as continted with me as though 'twas Miss Kate herself. Asy, asy, Fido ; you've no great cause, I'm thinking, for your fun jist

now." When they reached Mr. Dalton's house, Honor stepped into the shop, where the good bookseller was, as usual, stationed behind his counter; and by the fire, as usual also, stood our old friend, Mr. Crosby, warming the gloved hands, which were held behind him, and looking about with his usual sardonic expression of countenance: but on seeing Honor with Fido following her, he was evidently moved by some unusual curiosity, which was not however immediately gratified. Honor spoke a word, in a low tone, to Mr. Dalton, who said in reply, "Certainly, go in, my good girl, Mrs. Dalton is in here;" and opening the door, which led to his sitting room behind the shop, Honor entered, calling to Fido to follow her, and as the door was instantly closed, Mr. Crosby could not, without asking questions, make out the object of her mission, so he resolved to remain, and see what might be the result of her visit at this late hour in the evening, for it was now near seven o'clock. Mrs. Dalton was not in the parlour when Honor first entered it; but, with his back to the door and seated in his high chair, was her little boy, engaged with some playthings: he most joyously greeted Honor and the pretty Fido; and when his Mother came in, Willie was seated on the rug, with his fat arms round Fido's neck. This, of course, delighted Mrs. Dalton, and, on reading Kate's little note, it was with no small pleasure that she called Mr. Dalton, to consult him as to what answer she should send Miss Sinclair, quite sure that her kind husband would gladly consent to an arrangement so agreeable to all the par-

ties concerned. Mr. Dalton was delighted to be able to oblige Miss Sinclair, and told Honor that he would undertake the charge with the greatest pleasure, and that at any time, when it was requested, Fido should return to her former Mistress. Poor Honor had been sadly plagued "wi thim fools of tares," and she had scarcely spoken since she arrived; now, however, she made an effort to thank Mrs. Dalton in her young lady's name, and then, stooping down, she lovingly fondled and caressed the little favourite, and bidding them all a hasty farewell, was departing. The door, which she held half open in her hand, obscured the shop, and she did not see the old gentleman, who still stood there while she uttered her parting words of thanks. "I'm intirely obliged to ye, not only for Miss Kate, but for your kind looks at me, and poor Fido; an the loss of the poor baste will be lessened, now that my young lady will know that the dear little boy will make much of it; and so, good night to ye all." And Honor hurried away to give her young mistress an account of what had passed.

Mr. Dalton then returned to his place behind the counter. Mr. Crosby looked at him askance, then turned slowly and looked into the fire; turning as on a pivot, he again found it needful to place his hands behind him and warm them, and still he only uttered an occasional growl; at last he said, "So I suppose that fine lady's pet is without a home, hey? Serve them right; what do girls want with Italian greyhounds, I wonder! Well? what's your wife going to

try how she will look with a fine lady's dog at her heels, hey ?

Mr. Dalton knew him too well to care for his growling, so he only said, with perhaps a little spice of displeasure, " My wife is always glad to do a kind action, and she certainly has taken charge of Miss Sinclair's little favourite."

" Oh, ah, very well ; all right, no doubt ; all very right ; but I say, Italian greyhounds are foolish things, *very*. I saw it there to-day, in the young lady's room ; well, she is but young ; she'll know better some day, I've no doubt."

Mr. Dalton only said, that " When young ladies like Miss Sinclair were ready and desirous to do their duty, as she had done, he did not think even Mr. Crosby, with all his discrimination, would find much cause for complaint."

At this the old gentleman coughed away a half smile, and said, " Oh, all very fine, but I *hate* young ladies and Italian greyhounds, and all their fooleries." And having made this churlish observation, he walked out of the shop.

Honor soon rejoined her young mistress, who listened with much interest to the account she brought of Fido's reception, and felt very glad that she had made this little sacrifice of her wishes, and that her favourite Fido had found so comfortable a home.



CHAPTER VI.

KTHE next morning Kate rose early, every thing was quite prepared for her departure, and she now only waited for Charles; it was at about nine o'clock that Mr. Pleydell called to take leave of her, and Honor was told she must be most attentive to his directions all day, and that as soon as the sale was ended, which would be at about four o'clock, she should leave all the keys in Mr. Pleydell's care, and join her young mistress at Mr. Eveleigh's house; but at present Mr. Pleydell was not to be told the place of her father's retreat. In half an hour more Charles arrived, and joyously did Kate spring into his arms: for a few moments both were quite overcome, and neither could venture to speak; but Charles, whose high spirit could never long sustain depression, soon rallied, and he began to make most active preparations for Kate's departure. A cab was called, Kate's boxes were hastily put in; and then Charles, placing her in the carriage and seating himself by her side, drew down all the blinds, assumed a manly tone and told the driver to start and make

the best of his way to — Street; whence they intended to proceed on foot to Mr. Eveleigh's house. The drive occupied but a short time, and Kate had scarcely regained her composure, when the sudden stopping of the carriage roused her. Charles jumped out, and directing her to wait one moment, he darted into a baker's shop, the door of which stood open, and asked permission to leave his sister and the boxes there, while he looked for some one to convey the latter to their place of destination. The civil shopkeeper readily assented, and Charles then dismissed the carriage which had brought them, as he did not wish the driver to have a clue to their present place of abode. After sitting a short time in the baker's shop, a porter's barrow was procured, and, with their boxes safely packed upon it, they set off to walk by its side to the street in which Mr. Eveleigh's house was situated. On their way, Charles told Kate many particulars respecting their new habitation, and she shrunk from the description of the comparative wretchedness of its arrangements; but they both agreed that energy and exertion might soon render any place comfortable and even happy; and that henceforth they would live only for the benefit of the dear party who were now so dependent on them for all that could soothe them in their sad state of distress. And now they turn a corner, and Charles whispers Kate to "keep up" and show a "cheerful face," for they shall be there in a moment: the porter is directed to stop, and Kate recognizes the

old red brick house, with its three steps up to the door, and its old-fashioned iron palisading on each side of them; long casement windows, extending nearly all along the front of the house, showing, by the small size of the panes of glass, that they have for many long years afforded light to the rooms within ; the door too is somewhat heavy, and the knocker ponderous.

Charles pushed it open, without announcing their arrival by rap or ring, thinking he should like to give Kate a moment to recover herself, before they mounted the stairs. There was a square sort of entrance hall, and this and the staircase were all wainscoted with dark oak ; in this way, indeed, nearly every part of the house was finished, giving an air of respectability to the appearance of the place. The boxes were now brought in and placed in this entrance, and the porter who had brought them was paid and dismissed ; yet, strange to say, Kate still lingered, longing as she did to see all the dear party, and though she had hitherto felt no doubt of her own firmness, she was now scarcely equal to the scene which awaited her. In another moment Charles, passing his arm round her waist, led her up the first flight of stairs ; but at the first sound of their footsteps, two little cheerful voices were heard, exclaiming, “ Oh, they’re come, they’re come, dear darling Kate’s come, now we shall be so happy ! ” — and, with bounding steps, Emily and Rose, rushed into their sister’s arms, saying everything at once, in the manner of all excited young children : “ Oh, Kate,

we've been sitting on the stairs *all* the morning, and we are not at all cold, and dear Mamma is certainly better, and Papa's longing to see you ; and oh, Kate, Charles has made—" but here Charles interposed, and putting his hands, goodhumouredly, before the two little rosy mouths, he said, " Gently, gently, my dear little pets ; you must not tell Kate all our secrets, and tire her spirits before she has seen Mamma ; come, come, run away little kittens, or we shall never reach the top of this weary old house." However, they reached the last landing ; and then, and not till then, Kate was folded in the arms of her Father ; but both were too much oppressed to speak, and it was with a trembling frame that Mr. Sinclair embraced his daughter : conquering their emotions as soon as possible, Kate entered the room in which her dear Mother awaited her arrival, and where she had been induced to remain, that she might receive her child without the presence of the younger children ; and as Kate knelt by her side, and placed her head on her shoulder, she audibly distinguished the loud pulsation of that dear Mother's palpitating heart ; yet all was, as far as possible, calm and composed : a glance sufficed to show Kate the privations which had been already endured, and which must have caused much suffering to their sensitive hearts, and scarcely could she restrain her agitated feelings ; a short time, however, restored them in some degree to composure, and then Charles and the little ones joined them, and Kate was constrained

to listen to all the details of their proceedings since they left her ; they insisted too on showing her all the little contrivances by which they had managed to find the necessary accommodation for such a party in these “ bachelor’s rooms,” of which Kate was taking a quiet but accurate survey, and which consisted of a tolerably large room, with dark wainscot paneling, lighted from the top by a skylight, at one end, and having also a long range of casements on one side : at the farthest part of the room stood a bed with old fashioned hangings of dark green moreen, which looked a little moth-eaten and dingy, still it was evidently perfectly neat and clean. A long sort of stand, covered with green baize, was placed along the centre of the room, which had been used by Mr. Eveleigh as the pedestal, on which to place the subjects for his artistic pencil ; and round the room, at different intervals, were placed other stands, on some of which there still might be seen some clever and even valuable busts and torsos ; a painter’s easel rested against the wall in one corner, and several other minor objects, marked this as the painter’s “ studio.” A large fire-place, with a small grate in it, but imperfectly supplied the warmth which so large a room required, and a few rather hard-seated mahogany chairs, with stiff upright backs, completed the furniture of this singular apartment, with the exception of a large mahogany table, which, covered with coarse green baize, stood in front of the fire ; within this room, which served as the bed-room and

only sitting room for her parents, there was another small room, with a bed in it and a couple of chairs ; and here, Emily told Kate, "she and Rosy had slept ever since they came ;" and she also told her that " poor Charley had been obliged to sleep in the place where all Mr. Eveleigh's cups and saucers were kept," a sort of closet pantry, just at the top of the stairs ; and the chattering child continued, " I do'nt know what you and Honor can do, Kate, for there are no more beds in this funny old place, and Papa will be more vexed than ever now. What will you do, dear Katie ; do you think we could all sleep in this one little bed ? "

What a change for Kate ! yet she cared not for herself, and kissing the dear little ones, she said, " Did you ever read the Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, dear Emily ? " " Oh yes, Kate, and I know what you mean, and we'll all be make-believe Robins-sons, and that will be charming, for I always wished I could be Robinson Crusoe." Kate smiled, and patting her on the head, said, " Well then, now let us begin to imitate him in all his clever contrivances, to banish inconvenience and repining."

Charles was now called into the room, and after much cogitation, he suggested that they had better leave all these troubles to him, and that before the hour of rest approached, all should be comfortably ar-ranged ; but how this was to be done, they could not imagine. All now began to exert themselves to make

everything as neat and comfortable as circumstances would admit, and although they had to contend with many difficulties, the young ones thought it would be rather amusing to have so much to do, and to be of so much importance ; on this day, too, they scarcely realised all the perplexities of their situation, as Kate had brought cold provision, and many things, which added to their comfort.

Mr. Sinclair, who could not be induced to look about him and take a part in these preparations, sat with his hands folded on his knees, and scarcely spoke or moved for hours at a time, then suddenly starting up, he paced the room in silent distress and sorrow ; he looked fearfully ill too, and poor Kate felt shocked at the change which a few days had effected : his usually fastidiously neat dress was now quite neglected, his unbrushed clothes seemed as if he had no thought either for his comfort or appearance, and it was evident that his health was rapidly sinking, from the distressed state of his mind. His wife and daughter watched him with anxious eyes, but avoided saying one word that might betray their deep grief, and everything was done to conceal the difficulties by which they were now surrounded. Late in the afternoon, he suddenly asked what was to become of Kate, and demanded, with assumed calmness, “ What arrangement they proposed for finding sleeping accommodation for so large a party ? ” To which Charles replied, “ Oh, *I* shall manage, *I* shall contrive it all presently : ” and he began

carefully to examine every article in the room. On turning over the long shaped pedestal, which was covered with baize, it was discovered to be hollow, and as it was sufficiently long, and large enough to contain one of the little girls, it was determined to fit it up as a sort of crib bed, and to leave the other bed for Kate and little Rosa : thus the first real difficulty which had arisen was cleverly obviated ; and now Kate placed some wood on the fire, and wheeled two chairs close to the cheerful blaze, for her parents ; then she and Charles were very busy indeed bringing a cloth to spread over the table ; then tea things were to be fetched, and Rosa and Emily would make the tea-kettle sing a merry song, to "enliven dear Papa;" and then Kate brought two little cakes she had bought for the little ones, and when the fire sent up a glowing light, which even cheered the darkness of that dark room, and the children were seated round the table, laughing and talking, and devising a thousand ingenious plans, by which they might even cause Robinson Crusoe himself to sleep in the shade ; and when Kate offered the two nice buns to the little would-be inmates of a deserted Island, and they pushed the said cakes into the hands of "dear Papa" and "darling Mamma," even poor Mr. Sinclair could not help admitting the hope that, with these affectionate beings about him, the sun of happiness would surely shine upon him still. And now, just as the room was filled with the grateful scent of the warm

nice tea and toast, a step on the stairs announced the arrival of an addition to their party, and an exclamation of "Oh, that's Honor; I'm sure it is!" escaped from the children, and Charles rushed to the door, to admit the poor wearied sad girl. Honor, shivering from the effects of the cold and fog without, stood for a moment, quite surprised and delighted, at the change which had been made in the appearance of the before cheerless apartment, and afforded a strong contrast to the now warmed and comfortable party, who were seated round the tea-table, in front of the blazing fire. She looked pale and wearied, and the sudden transition from the cold, foggy air of the street to the bright and cheerful apartment, quite bewildered her.

A loud, and friendly greeting, from the little ones, and the kind request from her master, that she would "come in" induced her, after laying aside her wet cloak and bonnet on the landing, to advance towards the party: but it was evident that the poor girl felt quite abashed and confused, at finding herself, for the first time, obliged to assume a position so new to her; to have no kitchen to wait in till "Miss Kate" or "the Mistress" wanted her, no fire to approach but the one round which those she so respected were seated, at their evening meal; no means of showing how bitterly she dreaded being an intruder upon the privacy of her honoured master and mistress. All combined to distress and silence the good, faithful creature: and she stood looking at Kate with a mute

appeal, which seemed to ask for advice and direction. Mrs. Sinclair kindly offered her a cup of tea, which she gratefully accepted, and then retired to the farthest corner of the room, where she contrived to make a hiding place for herself behind the bed-curtains. But nothing could induce her to approach the party again until the meal was ended, and then with all the air of a new servant anxious to secure a good place, she asked Charles in a low tone : "Would he be so good as to show her the way to the pantry."

Kate deferred all enquiry and conversation with Honor till she could be with her alone, as she dreaded mentioning the subject of the sale before her father ; and as soon as Honor had disappeared with the tea-things, Mrs. Sinclair and the girls took out some needle-work, while Charles busied himself in trying to arrange some more plans for the morrow, and Mr. Sinclair again became immersed in saddened thoughts.

An hour had elapsed in almost silence, broken by vain efforts at cheerful conversation, when a low and timid tap was heard at the door, and to the great surprise of the assembled group, a little girl of about twelve made her appearance in the gloom of the doorway. The room at that end, was scarcely lighted, and they were all quite at a loss to make out who the intruder could be. She wore a very broad frilled cap, and a sort of tartan plaid petticoat, rather short, exhibiting a pair of well turned feet and ankles, but without the encumbrance of shoes or stockings ; and in a broad

Scotch dialect, she said, " My leddy's sent her kind respects tull ye all, and she will be happy to give ye a bed, if ye have'nt enough for all the family, and she'll be happy to pay her compliments to ye, the morn."

" The children were half inclined to titter at the strange little servant's dress and manner, but their impatience to know who she could be checked them, and they listened attentively to the girl's answers to Mrs. Sinclair, who now asked her, " Who sent her, and whose servant she was ? "

" Deed then I'm serving lassie to Miss Moffat, and she bids me tell ye ye'll be kindly welcome to the use of a room on her floor ; and the maid can come down a bit when ye'r tired of her company up stairs ! "

" How very kind, how very considerate !" burst from the lips of all the young ones. And though for a moment Mr. Sinclair was heard to mutter " Impossible, Strangers," &c. &c., the little girl was requested to come in while Kate prepared a hasty note of thanks, for the offered civility, and accepted the room which was at this time so especially required. The little stranger approached the table, and her sweet countenance and pretty smiling face quite charmed the children ; and Rosa was detected holding her wax doll in such a position, as to induce the admiring gaze of her blue eyes to be most fully devoted to its beauties.

" What is your name ? " Emily asked, and the child in a whisper said, " I'm Maggy, the piper's child, and I live wi Miss Moffat."

The note was now ready, and the child dismissed, Charles kindly lighting her down the dark staircase. It was then settled that the room thus offered should be devoted to Charles's use, and that Honor should for the present sleep in her pantry closet, where she assured them she could make quite a comfortable "shake down" for herself.

All their worst difficulties now seemed removed, at least so Kate and the young ones imagined; but to the parents still came the thought "Whence shall we find bread that these may eat and not die?"

Maggie descended the last flight of the stairs and was groping her way along the dark passage below, when a door suddenly opened, and a stream of light proceeding from the room within assisted her very considerably in her progress. She hastily ran forward and without recovering the little alarm which a few steps in the dark had occasioned her, she stood with blushing cheeks in the presence of her Mistress, who was awaiting her return with great impatience.

"Weel Maggie, an have ye spereed at the leddy hersel'? an what did she say tull ye? but O lassie, I see ye've got a screed of a note for me! come, just hand it here, bairn, an we'll see."

Miss Moffat seized Kate's note, and held her head very erect as she read the "Varra leddy-like epistle fra Miss Sinclair:" who, as usual, wrote in so kind and courteous a manner, as to give great pleasure to the person whom she addressed. On this occasion

her note was productive of a very considerable share of satisfaction : and for some time Miss Moffat moved up and down the room, with the air of a queen on a country stage.

Miss Moffat was an elderly spinster, whom a cold world had not treated with much warmth, and on whom the icy shoulders of neglect had too often been turned, for the sin of poverty had set its blasting finger upon her, and for many years she had been accustomed only to its consequent sorrows and sacrifices. She still however felt a peculiar pleasure, when by any circumstance she found herself included even for a moment, within the pale of that barrier which too often excludes all on whom the ban of poverty has fallen. She was by birth a lady of good Scotch family, and in her youth had enjoyed the hospitable comforts of a Highland home ; but time had deprived her of " friends, fortune, all," and at this period of approaching age, she had gladly accepted the kind proposal made to her by her " far off cousin" Mr. Eveleigh, that she should occupy part of his old house in —— street. The house, as we have seen, was partially furnished, and afforded to poor Miss Moffat a more comfortable and respectable home than for some time previously she had enjoyed. She immediately, by her cousin's permission, found lodgers for some of the rooms which she did not require ; and thus derived a small addition to her very scanty means of subsistence which otherwise would scarcely have provided her with

daily food. The trials and privations to which she had been subjected, had by no means hardened Miss Moffat's heart; and she ever felt particularly excited by those sorrows which had for their origin either poverty or neglect: and now that she had it in her power to bestow a kindness on real "born leddies," she felt a glow of true Scottish hospitality which brought back a tide of early recollections, and it was with some pride that she told Maggie to "mak haste to get ready the spare room and the braw linen which was once her 'ain dear Mither's,'" and which consequently was reserved for special occasions. "And get a' weel airrit and see that a' was reddy" for she expected a guest to sleep that night.

Maggie, who had been a very short time in her present capacity of chief servant to Miss Moffat, was so bewildered by these unusual directions that she only stared for a moment, and then said, "What's yer wool, Maam?"

"Gude guide us, lassie! dinna ye ken that I sent ye to offer them a bed? and dinna ye ken it must aye be airrit?"

Now then Maggie quite understood the intentions of her kind mistress, and she promised to do it all as weel as she could: but Miss Moffat awoke from her dream, and lo! it was but a wee bairn by her side; so she decided that "gin she wanted a' done wi propriety, she had better just do it hersel," and she instantly with great alacrity busied herself in preparing

as far as was possible for the comforts of her visitor, and when Maggie had lighted a little fire, and the bed was furnished with really fine Scotch linen, the room looked, as Miss Moffat said, "an unco comfortable rasting place." And she hoped her "guest would sleep in pace, for she was sure she had spared nae trouble : an noo lassie get the bit of supper and then ye sall go to yer sleep, for ye look varra sleepit and tired, I'm thinking."

"An what sall I get for the supper ?" asked little Maggie. "Ye ken we finished the seep's head, and pickit the banes quite clane, the dinner time this day."

"Ah weel hinnie, warm the bit of fried potato and bring me, and ye sall have half of it yersel."

Maggie departed, and soon a loud hissing of frying was heard by Miss Moffat, who, on hospitable thoughts intent, sat looking into the little wood fire in her sitting room, leaning her elbow on the small, round and highly-polished table by her side, on which stood a candle in a very old-fashioned small silver candlestick of upright form, and having a small shield, with the arms of her family engraved upon it. This candlestick seldom saw daylight, but as Miss Moffat did not omit any opportunity of displaying to an admiring world this almost solitary vestige of the brilliancy of bygone days, she had now placed it in a conspicuous place, with its candle ready to light up its glories, the moment a footstep on the stairs should announce her expected visitor. Meanwhile, it was

not needful to *think* by candlelight, so Miss Moffat sat, indulging her reveries by the fireside. Presently in came little Maggie carrying in her hands a dish with a cover over it, this with trembling eagerness she placed on the little table, upon which Miss Moffat had hastily placed a snow-white little cloth, but before the cover was removed from the dish, a long blessing on the food before her was pronounced in a solemn manner by Miss Moffat. Maggie waited with all the patience she could muster, but it was evident the child was much delighted when at length the signal was given to her and she raised the cover, when forth came a goodly scent of fried bacon, with an egg placed most invitingly upon its tempting surface.

"Hech, sirs! saw ye ever the like o' that? Hey Maggie dear, but whar will ye have gotten sic delicat provisions for us? but hold! bring your het plate hinny, and tell, whiles I gie ye some, whar did ye get it. I fear ye've been sae extravagant as to buy it: but whar wad ye get the money, child?" The good lady paused, and awaited the reply before she indulged in the dainties before her.

"Deed, then," said Maggie, "it's not much it cost, for whan ye sent me for the wood there was a farthing in change, and the man askit me would I have the farthing or an egg? and so I took the egg, and—and he gave me the bit of bacon."

Maggie's eye and blushing cheek betrayed her; and Miss Moffat said, "Oh Lassie, hinny! I *fear*, oh, I

greatly fear, its a *lee* ye have been tellin me ; for I *know* ye could nae sae provide the things before me : but eh lassie, dinna be afraid to speak the truth, for ye meent it kindly, an I'se forgie ye, bairn, if ye've been betrayed into a faut."

Maggie could not resist the tender, gentle tones of her kind mistress, and she sobbed in silence. At length she confessed that she had not bought the usual quantity of wood, and that it had fallen a little in price, and thus she had a few pence to spare, and she thought her dear "leddy would just be wanting something" for her supper, and, reckless of consequences, she had purchased the bit of ham and the egg of which the savory dish was composed."

"An ye sult ha telt me sae afore, Maggie, an then we might hae said there was nae grate harm dune ; but noo, lassie, ye have broken a great command of *Him* wha is truth itsel ; and it's no be eating or drinking we will this night. I'll share a' wi ye, lass ; but if ye tell me a *lee*, 'deed it's my duty to shew ye yer sin. Sae noo tak a' awa, for I'se no heart to eat alone : sae gang awa to yer bed.—I'se talk tull ye may be the morn."

In vain the child wept and entreated, Miss Moffat was inexorable, and Maggie retired in sorrow and shame, and soon wept herself to sleep on the little bed which occupied a corner of her kind mistress's room.

In a few moments after this little scene had taken place, Charles's step was heard on the stairs, and Miss

Moffat opened her door, having first lighted the long-prepared candle. Her dress and appearance were so singular, that Charles could scarcely restrain a smile. Standing in the doorway, with the silver candlestick held aloft as in triumph, Miss Moffat displayed to advantage the remnants of finery of ancient days with which she had adorned herself on this eventful evening. Her cap, which was of old but fine lace, was trimmed with a profusion of cherry-coloured ribbons, of which a sort of wreath of bows surrounded her face : from beneath this tawdry cap hung the well-oiled curls of a flaxen wig, which were so disposed as to give as juvenile an air as possible to the thin and almost wrinkled face and throat beneath. Her dress was of plaid, which, though originally of bright and handsome colours, was now, both in fabric and form, worn and old-fashioned. Her throat was a good deal exposed ; and as she still had some remains of the pink and white complexion of former years, she looked, in the dim light like some old faded doll. Still, her kindly smile, and bright blue eye, gave promise of an amiable nature, and Charles returned her salutation with much politeness, thanking her most sincerely when she ushered him into the very comfortable room which she had prepared for his reception.

Having wished him " Gude night," Miss Moffat retired to her own room, where she bestowed a kind and pitying look upon the now sleeping little culprit, saying, " Puir bairn, she is but a chield, and has pro-

bably been but leetle instructed in the right way ; and in the morn I'se gie her some gude advice, and strive to win her young soul to God, if it be *His will.*" And Miss Moffat's sleep was sweet and peaceful, and her rest undisturbed.





CHAPTER VII.

Twas at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the next day, that Mr. Crosby's respectable housekeeper, Mrs. Fairly, was seated in her own snug little sitting-room, surrounded by all those comforts which old and faithful servants generally contrive to draw around them in their advancing age; this room occupied the southwest corner of the house, and looked out upon the well-kept grass plat and flower borders in front. But as good housekeepers think it right to keep an eye upon all visitors, Mrs. Fairly had induced her master to have another window opened at the western angle, thus converting her room into a sort of observatory; and here, when seated close by her fireside, Mrs. Fairly contrived to see every one who approached the house. As the good lady, however, was particularly sensitive of cold draught, these windows were well defended with sand bags, neatly covered with green baize; a strong carpet of bright green and scarlet covered the room, and a warm rug was placed before the fire; the polished brass fender and fire-

irons gave evidence of Hannah's skill ; and the bright, but not blazing fire was most methodically kept at a certain pyramidal altitude, and as Mrs. Fairly filled each crack as it appeared with a coal or cinder, a clear fire it remained, and without any " waste or extravagance," as she told her little servant. On the rug was placed a square footstool, on the top of which sat an erect tabby cat, worked in wool, but looking rather old and faded in its beauties, which, as it had evidently occupied that peculiar position for many a long year, was a result not to be wondered at by any one. Many were the curiosities by which Mrs. Fairly's room was adorned, and of which she was particularly proud for they were the gifts of her kind though strangely mannered master, who generally compensated for any unusual degree of churlishness or asperity by bringing some fresh ornament for the decoration of her room ; and as in former days Mr. Crosby had visited distant climes, he possessed many things which were well calculated to please the good lady. Amongst these treasures were some glass cases containing beautiful little birds of the most brilliant plumage, and many coloured flies and beetles, one of which occupied a most conspicuous place on a side table, and was shewn to every friend as the " Dimont Beetle;" and had it been formed of one single diamond, Fairly would scarcely have thought it more valuable. On a table against one wall was placed a handsome tea tray, and an urn which was in so high a state of preservation as to shew

that its duties were confined to the ornamental branch. On the mantel shelf stood a church, with Mrs. Fairly's warming-pan watch peeping through a round hole in the tower. A pretty little black spaniel, with habit-shirt and socks of purest white, basked before the fire ; and as Mrs. Fairly had been assured, as she always said, "that he was a lineal descendant from King Charles," she had thought it only a "proper respect" to call him "*Prince*." A grey parrot, in a large and handsome cage, completed the arrangements of this "House-keeper's room."

On the evening we have mentioned, it was evident that Mrs. Fairly was expecting the arrival of some guest ; several times had she pushed aside her working materials and walked impatiently to the window which overlooked the back entrance to the house ; on each of these occasions Prince had jumped from his mat by the fire, and, springing after her, had pushed his way to the front place at the window, poking his black nose against the glass, and barking with great vehemence ; in vain was he commanded to be quiet, as every look from his mistress seemed but to excite him to fresh demonstrations of his sympathy, and though in perfect good humour, he barked his loudest every time she approached the window. At length Mrs. Fairly began to lose her patience ; it was almost dark, and she could no longer have distinguished her expected visitor from "any other she," and muttering that it "was always so," and that "Mrs. Flitters

always did come so dreadful late," Mrs. Fairly returned to her high backed chair by the fire. In a few moments a step announced the approach of her friend, and Mrs. Fairly tried to appear quite surprised when Mrs. Flitters glided into the room, and declared she was "so very much provoked that she could not get away sooner." She then shook hands violently with Mrs. Fairly, and patted "dear little Prinny," then poked her finger into Poll's ruffled feathers, rousing her from her dreams of distant lands. "Poor Poll," though very sleepy, made a waddling attempt at recognition, winked amazingly, and said in a sleepy tone, "How dy do." Upon which Mrs. Flitters was in raptures, and declared that "Polly always remembered her, waking or sleeping," and then scratched poor Poll till she bent her head to the floor of her cage with delight. Mrs. Flitters now laid aside her shawl, but cold as it was, bonnet she had none for fear of spoiling her smart new cap: then shaking hands once more with Fairly, and calling her a "dear good soul," she told her that she looked "*so well*;" and then, quite breathless with excitement at finding herself "*out* on a visit," she threw herself into a chair just opposite Fairly, stretched out her pretty figure so as to display it to the best advantage, and dispossessing Prinny of his accustomed seat, she placed her little feet on the footstool in front of the fire.

Mrs. Flitters was many years younger than Mrs. Fairly, and was not quite the sort of person one might

have expected her to choose as her friend and chief confidant; but Flitters was lively and good tempered, and moreover had taken a great fancy to the worthy Mrs. Fairly, whom she flattered by consulting upon all occasions, as being "so much her superior, and so able to instruct and advise her." Thus the good housekeeper felt a sort of motherly liking for her, and certainly greatly enjoyed her lively chat: moreover, there had been a little opposition from Mr. Crosby, who did not quite approve the intimacy between the two women, and, as it sometimes happens, a little difficulty of this kind only rendered them the more desirous to have their own way, so Flitters certainly was a frequent visitor in the housekeeper's room.

She was rather "young for a housekeeper," as Mrs. Fairly told her; but as she had been appointed to that "distinction, of course she was admitted to its privileges." But though she aimed at all its dignities, she could not prevail on herself to adopt a style of dress consistent with so staid an office. On the present occasion she wore a very jaunty cap, with pink ribbons, much too small to restrain the long black ringlets which fell very gracefully on each side of her really handsome face. Her dress was of dark silk, and did not by any means conceal the symmetry of her trim little waist: and her shoes of "patent seal" set off to advantage the small and delicate little feet which she now placed on the footstool.

It was quite evident, that, although Mrs. Fairly in some sort deprecated all this finery, yet that she felt a kindly pleasure in admiring her younger friend; and she smiled as she said, "Well, Mrs. Flitters, you're on the look out, I see. Oh, I shall dance at your wedding now before long, I'm sure."

Flitters only laughed, and turned her little vain head to try to catch a glimpse of the pink ribbons in the glass, and then said simperingily, "Oh now, really,—you're too bad, I declare. But how do you like my new cap?" whereupon Mrs. Fairly began a lecture on "*smart caps*," which Mrs. Flitters cut short by throwing herself back in her chair, and saying, "Come, come, now! I know you like it, and when you come to dance at my wedding, you shall have the pattern of it; there now! but *who* knows, Mrs. Fairly, though you are so sly, perhaps I shall get the bridecake first, and dance at *your* wedding,—may be before these new shoes are worn out!"

Fairly pretended to look very, very angry at this sally, but she was evidently pleased, and a little flattered that "Flitters should not think her too old" for such badinage: and she smilingly rose and rung the bell, and told Hannah to "bring the tea, and some hot cakes, and to be sure and let her know when master did come home." And the tea was black and strong, and the cakes were doubly buttered, and the two friends sat close beside each other, chatting merrily: yet it was evident Mrs. Flitters had some sub-

ject on her mind which she dreaded to bring forward, lest she should offend the good housekeeper. For a few moments she became abstracted and silent, till Fairly, thinking something was wrong, said, "I hope the tea is to your liking, Mrs. Flitters :" when that lady replied, with vehement protestations, that it was "the essence of perfection, — nectarine, fit for the gods ! "

"Oh, ma'am, I hope not : I should be sorry it should be so perfane." At which Flitters smiled in conscious superiority, but still she had not courage to approach the subject of her errand. At last she said, "I did not know, ma'am, that Mr. Crosby was a lover of sweet sounds." Fairly, who was slightly deaf, said, "Cods' sounds, did you mean, Mrs. Flitters ? Oh yes ; I believe he likes them very well when in season, you know, and nicely cooked : but it's difficult to have them in perfection."

"Oh, Mrs. Fairly, you quite mistook my meaning. I meant to say that I did not know your master had music in his soul."

"*Sole!* oh yes, yes, he likes a sole particularly, I know. Yes, yes, he is very fond of a sole."

Again Flitters had to try back : but this time she determined not to be misunderstood ; so, making a desperate effort, she said, "I did not know that he was likely to want a *piano*, ma'am, I mean ; but I saw one carried into this house to-day, I feel convinced."

"Oh! ay, that you *did*, Mrs. Flitters, sure enough; and now you've mentioned the circumstance, you can't say that *I* told you, and I really do feel quite glad to have some one to whom I can open my heart upon this subject. A *piano*, indeed! yes, and many a lady's gimcrack arrived here this blessed day, and *no* notice given to *me*, Mrs. Flitters: but when the hall was full of the trumpery things, master called me, and ordered me to put them into the *blue room*,—yes, Mrs. Flitters, the *blue room*, which I have never been allowed to use for any 'varsal purpose since here I've been,—and that's twenty years; and they *do* say that it has not been used since my master lost his young wife, who they tell me was a sweet creature, though something of a furriner like."

"Lor, Mrs. Fairly! a wife, *sure!* well I didn't know as he had ever been a Benedick, as my young ladies say: but do tell me more about it. What! he was married once, was he then? and was there any family, Mrs. Fairly?"

"Well I don't know anything about that, its neither here nor there; what *I* want to know is, what does all these things brought here to-day *intend?* what do *you* think? do you expect that he's going to be so foolish as to bring home another wife at this time of day?" But Mrs. Flitters was taken with a provoking fit, and told her friend that "really she could not say, such things did occur in the best of families; and that it would be a very hard thing upon

Mrs. Fairly if he should do such a silly thing ; " but still it did " seem too probable ; for else what could he want of such things as had been described."

At this poor Fairly could not at all conceal her alarm, and said, " Well, Mrs. Flitters, if such is the case, and I am turned adrift in my old age, I shall say there's no gratitude left in this wickedest of worlds : and in course no fashionable young lady would like such an antiquated housekeeper as me, for I never had any practice in grand dinners, and suchlike."

Mrs. Flitters showed great sympathy with the unfortunate victim of this supposititious injustice and cruel treatment, and held her hand affectionately, while she assured her that *she* could never be so ungrateful as to forget her past kindness ; and then dexterously turning the conversation, she resumed the subject of her curiosity. " I think you was saying just now that the forring lady had a child : did you say so, Mrs. F. or did I mistake your meaning ? "

" Well, I don't know much about it,"—and here Fairly lowered her tone to a whisper—" but I did once see in a drawer in my master's study a little vest of purple velvet, and some small fine shirts with lace and worked collars ; but whose they were, or where they came from, I never could think. I have often looked since, but the drawers are all kept locked : and as to ever naming such a thing it would cost me my place, I know. So now, my dear Flitters, I do *hope* you'll never, *no* never mention that ever I told you such a

thing; and, lor bless me, after all you know they might have belonged to his sister's child!" But here a loud ringing of Mr. Crosby's bell roused the gossipping Fairly; and, anathematizing Hannah for not having told her that "Master" was come home, she hastily pursued her way to the library. On opening the door, she was greeted with a "Well, what's the matter? hey? What's all this? Why, Fairly, I have positively rung twice! bring my muffin and candles, and don't lose any more time, I beg." Fairly curtsied and withdrew; but she heard him murmur "Ay, ay, women are always gossiping. I dare say that handsome fool Flitters is chattering in the housekeeper's room. Well, they're all alike, all alike; chatter, chatter, chatter, all day and all night."

Fairly's heart beat quick as she returned to her room, and some compunction too arose in her mind at having been drawn in to speak so freely on her master's concerns; and when with penitent looks she had placed every thing for his use with the greatest care she returned to finish her own tea, and chat with her friend she thought it only right to endeavour as much as possible to do away any impression she might have imbibed to the disadvantage of her good Master, and to admit that she had been to blame in speaking of him so much and so freely, even to her intimate friend. She therefore talked a great deal to Mrs. Flitters, on the duty which it was in all housekeepers, but herself in particular, to abstain from all idle bab-

bling ; and she confessed that if it were to come over again, she would burn her fingers before she would ever commit such a breach of trust, and gave Mrs. Flitters much good advice, and a strict injunction *never* to speak of what had been said, to any body. To all of which Flitters was ready to take her "Bible oath" conscientiously to attend. But alas ! when once a secret has escaped the lips, no power can recall it, and Fairly felt abashed and ashamed at having been so wanting in proper discretion.

Again her Master's bell rung ; and again she stood by his side, self-condemned and ill at ease.—Nor were her sensations at all more composed when her Master said "*Company*, Fairly, to-night, hey ?—some gossip or other I suppose ? hey ?" But she only curtsied, and moved towards the door, saying, in a subdued tone as she reached it :—" Oh, *not* company, Sir, only the adjacent house-keeper."

" What ! Mrs. Flitters, hey ? Well, she's properly named however ; a silly, flutter-about-thing, I'm afraid. Well, well, never mind, she'll soon learn more discretion under your good teaching, Fairly. And I don't think the worse of her for seeking your society."

Poor Fairly retired, quite overcome with remorse, feeling how little she deserved this unusual kindness in her master, and she mentally vowed a vow of silence upon all family secrets in future.



CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Kate Sinclair awoke after her first night's sleep in her strange abode, it was with vague and undefined recollection of the circumstances in which she and her family were now placed. Nor could she for a time unloose the faculties of her senses sufficiently to realize the difficulties by which they were surrounded; but every object upon which her eye rested, served to bring before her the reality of the sad change which had befallen them: and she strove to rouse in her mind every principle which could assist her in humbly submitting to the painful situation, into which they had been betrayed. The greatest source of comfort was the conviction, that these misfortunes were not in the smallest degree attributable to any fault in her beloved parents. But how best to obviate them, she in vain endeavoured to provide; she, however, took the resolution of exerting all her best powers for this purpose, and decided that as soon as she could see her family in some degree accustomed to their present embarrassing position, she would seek some situation

as governess, or even as a humble companion, and thus endeavour to earn a maintenance for herself, and perhaps some assistance for her family. Meanwhile, she would try to get some occupation for her pencil. Alas! poor Kate had yet to learn how many are the difficulties which poverty ever places in the path of talent. But it was time to quit these dreamy cogitations and to awaken her little sisters. "Rosy," as they always called her, soon wound her little sleepy arms round Kate, and murmured in her ear some words of love and affection; then sitting up she rubbed her eyes and shook back the clusters of shining curls from her warm cheek, and holding open the curtains of her little bed she looked about on the homely room, with all its poor appointments, and said, "Oh Katie, dear, what a strange place, where am I, and where are Emily and Nurse? Oh, I remember now, but I do not like this old shabby place at all, why do we stay here, dear Kate?" A little fondling and soothing soon appeased her childish sorrow, and Kate, ever ready to sacrifice her own feelings for the sake of others, exerted herself to cheer and amuse her little sisters while she dressed them, then having heard them repeat their simple prayer, she went forth from her chamber refreshed and comforted. She found her parents seated by the empty grate, for they had not yet admitted Honor to light their fire and arrange their room. By a little exertion however, all was soon rendered more comfortable, the fire soon burnt

brightly, and the good Honor was active and dexterous in averting every little trouble or inconvenience which arose, and by her ready tact and cheerful deportment obviated many annoyances. At about twelve o'clock, she was dispatched to procure some wood and vegetables, as she passed Miss Moffat's door she caught a peep at the interior of her room, and there she saw the little Scotch girl whom they had all so much admired on the preceding evening, but she was evidently in trouble, and Miss Moffat was talking to her very earnestly. On seeing Honor she rose, and coming to the door she enquired very kindly for all the family.

"How are they a' the morn? I've mickle fear tha are na sae weel accommodated as I could wuss, but we'e! see what can be done." To which Honor returned an assurance that all was very well and comfortable, though to be "shure its a sad change for them all, that's sartain: but they are all in good health, I thank the Lord for that same." She then enquired her way to Mrs. Crumps, and having been directed to No. 21 in the same street, she departed on her errand, and Miss Moffat returned to her weeping charge. But as this interruption had somewhat lengthened poor Maggie's term of disgrace, Miss Moffat contented herself by adding to the long sermon on truth, which for the last hour she had been pouring into the ears of the penitent child, by saying in conclusion, "An noo Maggie, I've telt ye my mind; and shewn ye the wickedness o' *leeing*. I sall say nae mair, gin ye'll

gie me your promise to seek by the Lord's grace to avoid the like faut in future. An gin ye mind what I say, an be a gude lassie, ye sall live wi me an be nae mair exposit to the dangers and temptations of this weeked toon."

Maggie sobbed and promised amendment, and said, " Oh Miss Moffat, if it had na been for *you*, I'suld hae been starvit to death. An noo I'll strive to be a gude lassie an mind yer bidding an yer teching in a' things ! "

Poor little Maggie was an orphan whom Miss Moffat had been led to pity and protect. It happened one day, in the " gloaming of a summer's e'en," as Miss Moffat would call a summer's evening, that she was called to her window, by the (to her) heart-stirring sounds of bagpipes, which gave forth the old Scottish tune of Maggie Lawdor with all the energy and zest which a true Highlander could alone have produced, and after waiting some time, and listening to the well known strains, nodding her head in time to its measure and then, though no songstress, joining in the tune which recalled so many early recollections and pleasant memories, she leant out of the window in the hope of seeing some emigrant " fra her ain dear kintra ; " when at the end of the street, and walking slowly up the carriage-way, she saw an old Highland piper with his bagpipes under his arm. His tartan kilt, though old and worn still bore the fashion of his clan, and his brawny legs were bare to the knees : his brow was shaded by a Scotch bonnet from beneath which floated

on the summer breeze his long locks of silvery grey. By his side was a pretty fair girl who also wore the dress of her country, and whose glossy, shining hair fell on her shoulders unrestrained by cap or bonnet. As they walked her “saft blue een” were upward turned to gaze upon the face of the old man ; and sorrowful and mournful was her glance : for this was evidently his expiring effort, as sickness and sorrow had done their work, and the poor old man would not often again awaken the sounds which he so dearly loved. For his Maggie’s sake he had defied the grief and hunger which were gnawing at his heart, and had come forth once more to seek the means of providing bread for his little Maggie. Her name induced the recollection of the air which he was playing, and it was the last sound of music that ever fell upon his ear.

As he approached towards the end of the street, Miss Moffat saw that he looked faint and weary, and the sounds of the bagpipes became every moment more feeble. She watched the pair with much interest as they came nearer and nearer to her window, and presently the music ceased altogether, and she saw the little girl gently take the instrument from the old man’s hand and strive to guide his tottering frame, but it was a vain effort, for after a very few more steps he became so weak and faint that he staggered and would have fallen, but for the kind aid of a passing stranger. Miss Moffat, whose sympathy had now reached its climax, hastily throwing on a shawl, rushed

into the street, and approaching the now weeping and frightened child, said, in her broadest Scotch dialect, " Hech Lassie, dinna greet ! May be he's only faint, an he'll be better presently ; dinna greet, there's a gude Lassie." At the sound of the well known tongue, the child caught hold of the " kind leddy's goun" and said, " Hech, Sirs ! but I'm feared he's dying for he's been ill this mony a day, and he wad'na bide at hame, ye see, but has been aboot the streets a' this het wearyfu day !" By this time several people had surrounded the poor man, and Miss Moffat directed that he should be brought into her house, which, by the aid of one or two of the standers by, was soon effected. Here, placed in an easy chair in the hall, Miss Moffat kindly administered to him some warm wine and other restoratives, and soon she had the satisfaction of seeing him partially recovered, though it was evident his days on earth would be few. Miss Moffat now enquired of the child where they lived, and why they were " sae far frae their kintra ? "

And she told her that her name was " Maggie Donaldson ;" that the old man was her Grandfather, and that she was an Orphan, and then went on to say— " Ye see, Ma'am, Daddy was a piper in a Highland regiment, and he did na marry sae sune in life as some folk do ; but when he came frae the wars, ye ken Leddy, he met wi' Granfather and he had but ane child, '*his* Jessy,' as he always called her, and sae ye see, Daddy sune lued her, an' then they were mar-

ried, and they lived in a dear little cot by the burn-side, and there, leddy, I was born, an we a' lived thegither; an oh! but we war unco happy, tull Daddie took the fever an died. An oh! but it was a sair heart that my dear Mither carried wi her abune twa years, an then, leddy, we laid her in the Kirkyard aside my ain dear Daddy; that day puir Granddad lost his sense, an he wandered awa wi his bagpipes, an I followed him at night, for ye ken the hoose was unco lanesome for me an I by me lane, sae I went after him, and sune I found him sitting aneath the tree that he aye callet 'his Jessy's trysting tree,' whar she used to meet puir Daddy when he was coming hame at e'en fra his wark; and there he sat, leddy, lukeing varra sad, an playing on the pipes. When I cam near him, he rose up an patted me on the head, an callit me 'a wee birdie,' an said, 'ye mind me o' *my Jessie*; but ye're mair like little Meg;' and then he lookit at me, an the tears ran down his puir auld face, an tha did his heart gude for he seemed muir like to hisself; but I could na win him hame, an I could na leave him, an sae ye see we cam awa thegither, an he wad play upon the bagpipes a' the day, an kind folk took pity on us, an aft they gave us food an milk, an some gude people gave me some clraiths; an sae ye see, at last we got to London, an here, awhile we got mair money than we could hae expectit, and Grandad took a room for us to bide in thegither, an he got much more sinse an we seemed like to be happier; but the last

three days we have had but little money giv' us, an the weather is het ye see, an Granddad has na had enough to eat, and sae he has got weaker, an mair daft a gude deal; an noo, I'm thinking, he'll may be no be long wi me; an waes me! I sall hae nae ain left to luve me!"

During this simple recital Miss Moffat's tears fell fast, and at times the faded blue eyes of the aged man were fixed on Maggie as if he caught some idea of the meaning of her tale, and Miss Moffat heard a deep sigh whenever "his Jessy's" name was mentioned. Poor little Maggie watched him all the time she was telling her story, and handed the wine to him, giving him her ready aid whenever it was needed and before the close of her narration, she had won for herself a large share of Miss Moffat's kind heart and good opinion. It was now getting late, and Maggie made her Granddad understand that it was time to go hame: so the old man with her assistance rose, and thanked the gude leddy for her kindness, and telling his grandchild to "tak great care o' the bread winner," he donn'd his bonnet and prepared to depart. Miss Moffat felt a great desire to see more of the interesting child and her poor daft grandfather, she therefore followed them at a little distance, determining to make enquiries, and resolving, if it proved to be a true story, to render them all the assistance which her very limited means would allow. She watched the child as she gently led the poor old man, and guided carefully

his feeble steps, or waited while he stopped to recover his breath. Sometimes he would try to take from her his favourite instrument, when she would gently put back his hand, saying, "Na, na, dear, ye're unco weak ; ye soll hae it the morrow !" And thus they pursued their way through two streets, when they turned into a narrow court, at the end of which they stopped at the door of a small, dingy-looking brick tenement, where a young woman was standing, with a baby in her arms. As they approached her, Miss Moffat heard her say to them, " Why, Meg ! I thought you'd never come back to-day. What ! has the old man been worse ? Well, come in and get your tea for you look tired to death, poor child !" They then all went into the house together.

Miss Moffat did not like to follow them lest they should be vexed at her having watched them home : she therefore waited a few moments till the woman she had before seen again made her appearance at the door, where she seemed to find refreshment from the cool evening air after the hot close day. Miss Moffat now addressed her, and asked her many questions about Maggie and her grandfather ; and finding that the little girl's account appeared to be an " ower true tale," she desired the woman to tell Maggie to keep the old man at home till he was better, and that she would send them some " brose and ilka thing that was needfu."

For many succeeding days poor Miss Moffat's table

was ill supplied with even necessary food, while her poor old countryman fared better than he had for a long time. Miss Moffat visited him too every day, and cheered his now fast declining hours. At the end of a week it was evident that his end was approaching, and she found poor little Maggie sitting on a low stool by his side, weeping bitterly, and vainly endeavouring to restore warmth to the thin hand which she was holding to her lips. Miss Moffat cheered and comforted the old man, whose fading faculties were for a moment lighted up by her assurance that "poor little Meg should go home with her," and she was rewarded by a sweet placid smile from the dying man. Maggie too was recognised, and her loving pressure of his hand returned by a feeble grasp.—And then all was over, and the kind good Scotchwoman took to her home the little weeping orphan, and "was unto her as a *mother*."





CHAPTER IX.



FTER receiving Miss Moffat's clear directions to Mrs. Crump's the greengrocer's, No. 21, Honor descended the steps, shaking out her umbrella and raising it over her head, and then carefully picking her way at a pace between walking and running, she proceeded as fast as she could towards the shop in question; but before she had advanced many steps a well known salutation met her ears, and brought the quick blush to her cheek. "The top of the morning to ye, Honor mavoureen," and Rory, with a large parcel under his arm, crept under the shade of her umbrella, and peeped into her face, with his kind, bright eye and speaking smile. "An whar will ye be going? an its och but I was quite right me darlint; for thinks I, shure she'll be afther coming out for some arn't at about twelve, for she knows if iver I can run away from the work, why its always at dinner time." "O Rory, ye don't think I'd fix the hour on the purpose to meet ye." But Rory only laughed, and insisted upon carrying the umbrella; and telling her all that he could find utter-

ance for of his love, and regrets at her being come “ into such a far-off street;” and then they paused and chatted, and then Honor looked up, and found the shop they were standing near was No. 120, and so they had to retrace their steps, and somehow or other they did not find Mrs. Crump’s shop for more than half an hour: however there they were at last, the umbrella was closed, and the lovers stood another moment in the shelter of the doorway, and then pushing open a sort of half door making a sharp little bell ring till they started at the sound which would summon stranger eyes and ears, they both entered the shop and tried to look as if they did not belong to each other, or any one in particular. The shop was redolent of scents of various kinds—celery, apples, and all sorts of sweet herbs lent their fragrant odours: festoons of onions hung round the walls, and formed a sort of triumphal arch over the head of Mrs. Crump, who, in a gown of many colours and towering cap, stood behind her counter. Mrs. Crump was very short and very fat, and her cheeks seemed to descend in soft bags on to her short neck ; the band, round that part of the figure which was supposed to represent the waist, lest it should quite disappear was fastened loosely with a very large white pin ; this band afforded great recreation to Mrs. Crump as it was constantly requiring new placing, the large pin, meanwhile, finding a safe hiding place in Mrs. Crump’s wide mouth : and as Mrs. Crump had just found this arrangement

of her dress needful, it was not until Honor had a little recovered herself that she was asked the usual question of "What can I do for you, ma'am?" Honor's errand was soon told, and Mrs. Crump waddled across her shop, unpinning and pinning as she went, and dived into a sort of cellar to find the little bundles of firewood, and to pick from her baskets some of her finest potatoes. During this time Honor and Rory got a few more words at the door together, and while they were thus standing and whispering another customer approached the counter and addressed Mrs. Crump, who had now returned to her triumphal arch. This was a woman in a faded black gown, with a small old black bonnet, and a weather stained red shawl; she asked Mrs. Crump the price of apples, taking one up in her hand, and pushing her thumb well into its yellow skin, making a deep indentation in the mealy fruit, she asked the price. "Three a penny, missis, and cheap enough I knows; vy, they cost *me* more." The woman felt in her pocket and found a penny, and taking up from the heap in the window three of the largest she could see, moved towards the door. She paused as she passed Honor, and took a hasty survey of her and her lover, and then went out of the shop munching an apple.

When she was gone, Mrs. Crump observed, "Vell, I'm glad she has made up her mind, for I'm blessed if she hasn't looked at them apples twenty times this ere blessed morning; but there isn't no pleasing them

unforn'ate critturs as hasn't got above a penny in their pockets."

Honor's things were now all ready, and she, with Rory, departed; but it will be believed they did not reach home immediately, for Rory had much to say. The parcel which he carried was the treasured work-box for Miss Kate, and how to dispose of it so as to prevent her guessing who had sent it to her puzzled poor Rory's brains. "Ye see, Honor," he said, "ye must understand not to let her be thinking that I—well there ye knows me maning; set it in its place, and there let her find it; but don't let her feel that she owes it to such a poor gossoon as Rory. How-ivver I needn't be telling ye, Honor, for I know ye won't do anything but what's befitting us, and proper like, but I'm stupid at the maning. Well, here's the box, an' now when will I see ye again? shure ye'll come out at twelve o'clock when ye can; but I musn't stay now, so ivery blessing be about ye, and God be wid ye."

The kind, goodhearted fellow gave the box into Honor's care, and ran off. Honor watched him for a few moments, and then slowly ascended the steps of the house; standing again for a moment when she reached the door, she saw the woman in the red shawl pass and look up at her and then go on her way, eating an apple as she walked. Honor thought it strange, for this woman had several times crossed her path while she was with Rory, and seemed certainly to have

some object in making her out ; and Honor could not help thinking that she had seen her before. "Where could it have been ?" well, she could not remember, and "it was of no manner of consequence." So she closed the door and went up stairs, to account in the best way she could for her long absence.

Mrs. Sinclair was resting on her bed, and Mr. Sinclair was seated at a table, moodily looking over some bills and papers. Honor quietly passed through the room and knocked at Kate's door, which was partly opened instantly by little Rose, who held up her finger and told Honor to be still and not speak a word, for what they were doing was a great secret. Kate was sitting in the middle of the room, and was busily occupied in cutting in lengths some blue striped printed cotton, of a common description, whilst Emily was running some of these lengths together, and Charles was making a sort of frame-work of upright, flat pieces of wood, at the distance of two or three feet apart; all were busy, and Honor much wondered what could be the purpose or intention of their work ; but Charles soon let her into their secret, by telling her that they were trying to make a long partition to screen the bedroom part of the studio from the part which they occupied as a sittingroom. Charles said he had been putting the frame together ever since he came there ; and that fortunately Kate had found among their clothing some whole pieces of blue striped print, which had been intended for another purpose at home, and

now they should make a complete division across the narrowest part of the room, which would make "dear mamma" so much more comfortable. Honor was strictly enjoined secrecy, as it must still occupy some days before it could be ready to put in its place. Honor begged to be employed, and it was settled that in the evenings she should lend her aid in putting the breadths of print together; she was quite delighted to see all the party so happily engaged, and felt great relief at being asked no questions relative to her absence.

It was now time to make some preparations for their frugal dinner, and Honor departed to get every thing ready; but she soon came back, and called out Charles, who was surprised to hear that he was wanted by Miss Moffat in the hall, and still more so, when he found that good lady standing in the midst of a large assemblage of packages of all sorts and descriptions, which she assured him were "a direckit to him and his family." Every thing was so carefully enveloped in pieces of matting that nothing could be seen of their contents, but all were directed in a stiff school boy's hand to some member of his family. What could they all be, and where could they be come from? All that Miss Moffat knew was, that while she herself was gone out a man had arrived with a spring waggon at her door, and had told Maggie that he was to "put them goods inside, in the hall;" that the child, supposing they belonged to her mistress, had received them; and that

as soon as all the things were safely deposited the man drove off; that he stopped again directly, and took up a woman into the van, and then they drove away as fast as they could. While this account was given, Charles was busily employed in examining one of the packages which was directed to "Master Charles Sinclair." First one bit of matting and then another was removed, and then a hayband was untwisted, till at length there could be no doubt as to its contents. Uttering a cry of real delight, Charles summoned Honor to "lend a hand," and between them this treasure, whatever it might be, was safely landed on the top of the stairs, and Honor was directed in a whisper to go and collect all the party in the outer room, and then to come to him again. While she was gone, Charles took off all the coverings which obscured his cherished treasure, and wiped the dust from every part of it, and then, on being summoned by the servant, ran into the room, saying, "Robinson Crusoe's first return from the wreck," and placed before their astonished eyes his own favourite little turning-lathe and the set of chessmen he had been so busily engaged in making for his dear mother. All now crowded round Charles, and on hearing his account of the things which were below, they joined in declaring their readiness to accompany Robinson on his next expedition, and even Mr. Sinclair agreed to "lend a hand."

Speedily were the things unpacked, and carried up into the studio. Emily and Rose clapped their hands

with joy and delight when "Crusoe," as they called him, announced that the two little nursery bedsteads, with all their belongings, were among the next cargo on "the raft." By degrees, everything was unpacked, and examined, and great was the happiness of the children when they found that dear papa's painting materials and easel were amongst the recovered treasures. "Dear Katie's" pretty French bed and writing-table were also there; a few nice drawings in water colours, and a pretty work-box, which belonged to Mrs. Sinclair:—in short, no one was forgotten, and all were happy and grateful to their unknown friend and benefactor. One large package still remained unopened in the hall, standing in a dark corner it had been overlooked; and this proved to be a nice carpet, of which Charles took possession, and determined to keep it in his own room till the new partition was completed.

They were now all busily employed in arranging and placing every thing in the nicest order; and for many days all felt the relief afforded by constant, active occupation, and Kate had the unspeakable comfort of seeing her father and mother gradually assuming their usually cheerful manner. During these pleasing occupations, the minds of all were busy in forming surmises and conjectures as to who could have so kindly considered them in their present difficulties; but no clue appeared which could at all elucidate the mystery. On opening one package, which they supposed had been intended to be the first to meet their

eye, for it was marked No. 1, a card fell on the floor, with these words : " A loan from a friend ne'er can wound or offend :" and *as* a loan Mr. Sinclair resolved to accept the benefit for his children's sake, earnestly hoping the day might come when his secret friend would declare himself, and permit him in some form or other to repay him. In a few days Charles's screen was finished, when, taking advantage of the temporary absence of his mother, who now took a short walk each day with Mr. Sinclair, the children, with Honor's assistance, got the carpet laid and the partition erected. This screen was about six feet high, and with it's pretty striped blue facing, added much to the snug and neat appearance of the room. The carpet, too, fitted nicely, now that the room was smaller, and when unrolled, a warm rug had been found within it's folds, which rug Charles placed before the fire, and then the children quickly arranged the furniture, and placed the plaster busts and figures round the room in the most picturesque groups. A few small billets of wood were thrown on the fire and sent up a bright and cheerful blaze, and Honor exclaimed with delight, " Och, thin, it's the blessing from the Lord entirely, when the childer provides for the comfort of their parents, and may His blessing be upon ye all for iver and iver. Amen."

And now a sound is heard, and Charles says, " Here they come : Kate, Rose, Emily, sit down, sit down. Honor, dear, *you* must stay to see their surprise, so you

can open the door. There now, all is ready :—oh, it is most charming.” Charles cut a caper, kissed his sisters all round, shook hands with Honor, and was in an ecstasy of happiness when the door was opened and the dear ones for whom these kind exertions had been made entered, exclaiming, “ Oh, how nice ! how very, very nice ! how has all this been managed, my dear, good children ? ” Mr. Sinclair’s lip quivered as he took the hands of Kate and Charles, and looked with fond affection and pride on the sweet, happy and confiding countenances of his children. Every thing was now duly admired, and the great improvements much commended. The evening closed in peace, and even cheerfulness ; and while offering up from his inmost heart a thanksgiving to that God who had bestowed on him the unspeakable blessing of such good and amiable children, Mr. Sinclair blushed at the recollection of his own despondency and want of energy, and he determined to imitate the virtue which in others he so much admired. Long and bitter was the communion which he held that night with his own heart : —how had he indulged in grief and anxiety ! how helplessly was he yielding to the torrent which threatened to overwhelm him in utter and entire ruin, and the still voice was heard, which bade him “ up, and be doing,” and to “ wake from the sleep of indolence, which was his besetting sin.” The thoughts and feelings of that night were as wholesome medicine to the mind diseased, and the morning saw him an altered being.

A clear investigation of his accounts was now undertaken. Mr. Pleydell had written to him and stated the result of the sale, and also that some creditors were willing to give time for the settlement of their accounts; so that there would be a small sum to meet present exigencies. All this was in some measure cheering, but it was evident that all must exert themselves. Kate hailed with real pleasure the altered demeanour of her father, and she now ventured to propose to him that she should seek a home in some family as a governess. It was a struggle; but consent was given, and Kate lost no time in writing to her former governess, Miss Hartop, requesting her to aid her in seeking some situation which might suit one so inexperienced as she felt herself to be, in the arduous task of tuition: but some days must elapse ere Kate could receive an answer to this letter, as Miss Hartop was, as she believed, with some family in Scotland.



CHAPTER X.

IT was now the second week in December, and a bright clear frost had succeeded to the dull and foggy days of the last month. Charles and his sisters took short walks near home, but all longed for the freedom and recreations to which at this season they had always been accustomed. None, however, would whisper, even, their secret wishes, and they steadily pursued their self-imposed duties and employments.

One morning, when Charles had been irresistibly drawn to the window, and was standing meditating within himself the possibility of proposing a long walk into the country, and wondering whether it would be infringing on the laws of seclusion which he believed had been decided upon, he was surprised and delighted by his father's suddenly saying, "Come, Charles, I see the bright sun has been tempting you to run away from the restraints imposed upon you, and I can quite enter into all your feelings, my boy; what say you to a long walk? Suppose you go to Fairburn, and call on your old acquaintances the Hunters. I daresay

they will give you such a welcome as you have often given to them in former days."

This was indeed delightful: not that he cared for the Hunters, at least not *all* of them, but it would be so charming after such a long absence from all his friends; and Charles, uttering his thanks, hastily descended to his room to prepare for what he felt was quite an event.

Mr. Sinclair took the opportunity of his absence to explain to his wife, that he had been for some days considering that as there was no necessity for the restraint he had imposed, it would only be right to let the young people mix occasionally with their old acquaintances, and give them perhaps an opportunity of interesting others in their future prospects in life, adding, "Mr. Hunter, you know, is well connected, and has, I believe, some influence which might be useful to Charles, and it is only a duty to put him in the way of benefiting by his friendly interest."

In a short time Charles appeared, dressed as in happier days, and with a bright look of self gratulation and delighted anticipation, he hastily received some farewell instructions and directions from his father and ran off, half fearing a recall, indeed not feeling at all sure that he really should be allowed such a happiness; and it was not till he had passed through two streets that he could induce himself to give up the idea that every footstep behind him was some emissary come to fetch him back, and he almost ran that he

might get as quickly as possible out of such a dangerous proximity. Fairburn was about a mile and a half beyond Belmont, but, by taking a short cut, Charles intended to avoid passing the dear old house, resolving to keep out of the way of all who would recognize him till he had seen the Hunters ; and now he had passed all the streets and turned into the lanes which led to Fairburn ; the roads were hard and crisp, and a beautiful hoar frost bespangled every tree and spray, lighted brilliantly by a mid-day sun ; some snow had fallen, and still, in places the ground was white and shining. Charles's spirits rose to a bounding height, and he could scarcely resist joining a party of boys who were sliding on a pond which he was passing, but a glance at his bright boots, and the recollection that he must appear to the best advantage at Fairburn checked him, and suddenly pushing the end of his walking stick through some crackling ice in his path, he began to soliloquize on his probable reception from the Hunters. " I wonder what they'll all be doing, and whether Flora will be there ? Mrs. Hunter is always kind, but I have known the boys strange sometimes—Frank is shy—but we are such old acquaintances—surely they will not like me the less because we are become poor and unfortunate ! " But the bright expectations which had hitherto been indulged received a sudden check, and Charles began to look himself over with an anxiety as to his appearance which he had never felt before : well, on he went,

however, and now the park paling which separated the grounds from the public path was passed, and Charles entered the handsome iron gate which admitted him to the sloping lawn leading up to the house, passing along by the side of a small piece of water, he paused to look at the dear old boat now safe in its picturesque boat-house, and to notice the many marks of skates on the ice, and as he proceeded up the carriage road to the house, he was struck with the beauty of the trees and shrubs, which were chiefly evergreens, and were now decorated with sparkling wreaths of the light silvery snow and hoar frost. As he approached the house, he saw one of the boys at the window, and as he instantly turned away, Charles thought, "All right; there's Spencer, and he's coming, I'm sure, to meet me;" reaching at last the door of entrance, which was at the side of the house, he stopped a moment, thinking that "surely Spencer would soon join him, and that he should feel less uncomfortable than if he went in by himself," and then wondering "why he felt afraid now, more than in former days," he decided that such feelings were "quite unworthy of a gentleman, and very idle and foolish," and he magnanimously pulled the large bell handle at the side of the portico, but the loud twanging sound of the bell, which appeared to Charles to ring longer and louder than he had ever before heard it, banished his newly acquired courage, and Charles felt with some annoyance, that his heart was beating and his cheek blushing, when

the servant opened the door. "Yes, they were all at home," was the answer to his enquiry, and Charles followed the man into the house, and turned on the right into the well known drawing room.

Mrs. Hunter was seated at a writing table near a window, and by her side sat a girl of about fifteen, very pretty and very fair, with a delicate figure and fashionably long waist; by the fire at each end of the rug and in easy chairs sat, or rather lounged, two young men of eighteen and twenty, and a younger boy was standing busily watching the gambols of a Skye terrier whose wiry hairs were bristling with excitement, as the elder lads incited him to fly across the rug, and snap at the shining boots which were held out in pretended efforts to tread upon his feet. All this was seen in a moment, as the man ushered Charles in, and, at his name being announced, Mrs. Hunter immediately rose and held out her hand, addressing him as "Charles," and kindly enquiring for "all at home :" but, kind as she was, Charles could not feel quite as much at ease as usual, and he *felt* that he was shy and constrained: the young men rose and languidly addressed him, and Flora also held out her hand. "Nothing to complain of," thought Charles, and he tried to "be as usual," but he felt the absence of cordiality; and presently the elder boys began, by sly snaps of the finger and thumb, and whispered words of encouragement, to excite "Tackle" to fresh play and fun, but no look included Charles, and an awk-

ward pause induced Mrs. Hunter to propose that Spencer, the younger one, should go and see if Mr. Hunter was in the study, saying, "that she was sure he would wish to see Charles." Spencer, whose ambition it was to follow the lead of his brothers, passed Charles without much notice, and in a few moments the elder lads summoned Tackle, and muttering something about the "Governor," sauntered out of the room. Mrs. Hunter felt annoyed, and pitying Charles's look of distress she insisted upon his coming near the fire, and tried to induce Flora to talk a little; but Flora was shy, or at least such was the excuse which Charles mentally admitted, and for some moments an embarrassing silence prevailed, broken only by sudden questions from Mrs. Hunter which were speedily answered, and silence again ensued; at last Charles rose and walked to the window, from whence he could see the pond on which he had passed so many hours in winter and summer, and there he now saw the elder Hunters enjoying a brisk run on their skates, followed by Tackle who was evidently in a state of great delight; in another moment Spencer ran down the Lawn and joined his brothers. For a few moments Charles stood silently indulging in a reverie, which certainly did not act very favourably on his opinion of his former friends, but he was roused from these cogitations by Mrs. Hunter, who said, "Surely that idle boy forgot to tell his Papa that you are here, Charles; I'll go myself and find him."

As soon as she had left the room, Flora rose and walked to the window which corresponded with that at which Charles stood, and stooping down, she took from the white mat on which it lay, a favourite little black and white spaniel which had been for some time curled round in a most reposing attitude ; holding up its little black face, she fondly patted it, and stroked and pulled its long black ears, saying in a very soft voice, “ Tiny, sweet Tiny, oh you dear little soft idle thing ; is’nt she pretty, Charles ? She will never grow any larger, and she is such a darling ; ” and Flora walked towards Charles, caressing Tiny as she approached him. Glad of some occupation, Charles stroked and admired the little animal ; and then feeling that with Flora he might throw off some of his newly acquired restraint, he said, “ And *you* too, Flora, seem to have decided that it is time to forget me.”

“ Not at all, not so I assure you, Charles ; but every body seemed so stiff and so cold, that I did not know what I had better say or do ; but I hate such silly pride, and I cannot think where Percy and Edward have acquired such foolish notions. I am but a child, Charles, but you will believe me I know when I tell you, that *I* love you all as dearly as I ever did, and I am sure Mamma does ; but those silly boys have just come back from Oxford, and they talk of nothing but ‘ *Oxford men*, ’ by which Mamma says she supposes they mean ‘ green geese ’ like themselves : so now do not mind their folly, dear Charles, but be as happy

with us as you used :" and the really kind little girl held out her disengaged hand to Charles, closely hugging Tiny with the other ; but by this time Charles's spirits had flagged and the kind tone of his former favourite quite overcame him ; he took her offered hand, however, and hastily turning away his head, pretended to busy himself for a moment with the scene before him. While thus occupied, a pony phaeton with a lady and a servant driving approached the house, and Flora exclaiming " Oh, there's that strange Miss Melville !" suddenly ran out of the room, leaving Charles alone, quite perplexed and ashamed at not having replied to her kind address except by a slight pressure of the hand which she had presented to him.

Short time, however, was there for Charles to indulge his thoughts on this subject, for in another moment a servant threw the door wide open and announced in a loud and more than usually pompous manner, " The Honourable Miss Melville ;" and a tall aristocratic looking lady, followed by three or four dogs, entered the room : she was dressed with more attention to extreme neatness than to any reigning fashion, although there was nothing in her appearance which could be considered in defiance of its most *exigeant* rules, except perhaps that the still very fine outline of her figure was less obscured by German innovations than some younger ladies might have deemed advisable ; in age, she was at that peculiar crisis when it is difficult to say to which class she would belong ;

as though decidedly *not* old, she would have been shocked at being included among the young ; erect in figure and with a rather lofty step and bearing, Miss Melville was most gentle and kind in her general demeanour, though when annoyed by any appearance of pride in those whom she considered as "Parvenues" or "Nouveau Riche," she was at times abrupt, and even severe. On entering the room, seeing only Charles standing at the window, and concluding that he was one of the young Hunters, she advanced towards him, but seeing as it seemed a stranger, she bent slightly, and seated herself in an easy chair near the fire. Charles, who had previously met her at a friend's house, accepted this as a new proof of the enmity of the world in general and felt still more dis-trait, but his shy look induced Miss Melville, who was very near sighted to take an opportunity of raising her glass, when she instantly and with the most frank and agreeable manner walked towards him, extending her hand, and saying, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Sinclair, I really did not recognize you, but you must forgive me for my sight is so very imperfect;" and entering into conversation, she chatted so agreeably and introduced Charles to all her favourites in such a lively manner, that he felt quite restored to his own good opinion ; and when Mrs. Hunter entered, she found him and Miss Melville talking and laughing most cheerfully, and all the cold restraint which had so cruelly oppressed her young visiter seemed to have

disappeared. But this happy state of things did not long continue, for in a very few moments the young men all made their appearance, and with an assumed air of style and fashion they approached and laid claim to Miss Melville's notice : she spoke to them all kindly, but with more constraint than she had shown towards Charles, and she did not at all encourage the ecstasy of admiration which they bestowed upon her pets, only smiling with a somewhat doubtful air when Percy declared that "Rover" was worth "twenty guineas;" she looked down on Rover, however, with an approving eye, which was answered by him with doglike gratitude, and he jumped and writhed around her with much apparent satisfaction. Miss Melville was now apparently engrossed in conversation with Mrs. Hunter, for whom she evidently entertained a friendly feeling : this, however, did not prevent her noticing the absurd behaviour of the two would be fashionable young men, who in short shooting coats and many coloured waistcoats and neck ties, were decorated with as many bright chains, and rings and pins as might qualify them for the situation of "travellers on their own account;" occupied with themselves and their great desire to appear to advantage before an "Honourable," and wishing for some opportunity of introducing their cousin the Member of Parliament, whose relationship they estimated as adding much to the Hunter distinctions, they totally forgot poor Charles's presence, till the door once more opened and

a servant addressed Mrs. Hunter, saying, "that Master was disengaged now," and Mrs. Hunter told Charles that he would find him in the study, adding, " You know your way, Charles." No ready offer from either lad to accompany him met his ear, and he therefore hastily crossed the room alone, feeling quite glad when the door closed behind him: he made his way to the study, passing an open door which disclosed the large billiard room divested of all furniture and in progress of decoration, proving that the usual Winter Ball was soon to take place; he sighed, as he recollect ed the last event of the same kind, when, with his arm round Flora's waist he had made her promise to re-serve for him all the Polka's and Waltzes for the evening: but he now finds it necessary to exert all his philosophy, for in answer to his modest tap at the study door, he is told in a rough but good natured voice to " Come in!" and there sat Mr. Hunter, tall, stout and merry looking, though rather pompous.

Magisterial Papers are before him, and Books, Law Reports and other insignia of office ; which, however, are somewhat inconsistent in their character with the other decorations of the room—Paintings of Dogs, Racers and Hunters, a pair or two of Antlers and a Fox's brush—a handsome rich Turkey carpet covers the floor, and on the rug in front of the fire lie two magnificent Pointers, muscular and bony, with eyes full of life and sagacity. On Charles's entrance, one of them rose from his couch by the fire and stood by

his master's side looking up into his face, as he addressed his young visiter: " Well Charles my boy, I'm sorry I have kept you so long; devilish cold is'nt it? Come, sit down man; here, Don, make room for your betters; down, sir, down Port, down;" and the good natured man placed a chair for Charles close beside him, then slapping him on the knee, said, " Well, Charles, and how are you all? I can't say how are you all *at home*, I wish I could; for upon my soul, I'm sorry, very, very sorry indeed; but that won't mend matters, will it, my boy? Have some lunch? Oh yes, do: stay and dine with us; you will, won't you?" But Charles, though pleased with his really open friendly manner, shrunk from a repetition of the cold and repulsive treatment which he had met with from the young men, and steadily but gratefully declined the invitation. " Well, now then you'll have a glass of wine?" and the bell was rung before Charles had time to answer. Wine and cake were ordered, and then, after partaking slightly of this refreshment Charles rose to take leave. Mr. Hunter vociferated a request that he would " Stay and take a longer rest," and then said, " if you want a friend, Charles, write to me; my cousin Mr. Lightfoot the Member will listen to any suggestions of mine, and do anything for *me*; and, you know something or other may—you see what I mean, my dear fellow, is this—I'm *willing* you know to lend my aid, and—well, well, you must *write*, you must let me hear from you." Charles seeing that

he was expected to put a period to his intended Patron's difficulties, by saving him from any further explanation of his intentions, shook hands; and, by the bye, he did not for some moments forget that he had done so, and then left the study: but, despite his now sad fit of mauvaise honte, he thought it only proper to wish "Good morning" to the party assembled in the drawing room. Flora was there, and Charles contrived, in making his parting adieu, to pass near her and to pause for a moment to look for his little walking stick; her eyes were quicker than his; she darted towards the window and taking it from its corner, held it towards him, saying, "Here it is, Charles!" Of course he drew nearer to receive it, and it was but natural that he should whisper a word of thanks to the only one who had shown any feeling of affectionate regard; and Flora did not look displeased at the "God bless you, Flora, I shall not forget you," which accompanied the farewell, which he uttered in a louder tone. When Charles wished Miss Melville good morning, she again presented her hand, and asked him kindly "Whether he had a long walk before him," adding, that "at this season walking exercise was always most exhilarating."

In consequence of this little attention from one whom they aspired to rank among their intimate acquaintance, Percy and Edward came forward, and walked to the door with Charles; and as if to make up for lost time, assumed a wonderful degree of interest

respecting the fate of his hat and great coat which had been laid down in the entrance hall: but it was an effort, and worth nothing in the eyes of their former friend or in those of the "Honourable," whose good graces they thus sought to propitiate, for on their return to the drawing-room they heard Miss Melville saying to Mrs. Hunter "What a particularly gentlemanly nice lad that young Sinclair is, poor fellow! I daresay he feels his poor father's misfortunes for he seems sad and out of spirits; and he looked so lonely when I arrived that I was quite glad to see him cheered and amused by watching these followers of mine," and she playfully tapped Rover on the head with her hand. "I suppose he does not *skate*, or I conclude he would not have been left by himself!"

This speech was addressed to Percy, who struggled in vain to repress the rising blush which Miss Melville's earnest look and manner produced; he found it impossible to frame any answer to the remark, and not daring to resort to his usual plan of evading any unpleasantness by addressing his attentions to "Tackle" he felt quite at a loss how to conceal his discomfort. Without appearing however to notice this Miss Melville, again addressed Mrs. Hunter, and enlarged considerably upon the distress she had felt at hearing of the unfortunate losses of Mr. Sinclair, "a man" she said, "really of taste and refinement, and as I am told, of most respectable connections and family, it is quite grievous to see them in so painful a situation; but

doubtless they will in some way be extricated from their difficulties, for they are, I am sure, people of a very superior grade of intellect and acquirement. I do not know where they are, but I am told they are in a state of real distress."

Mrs. Hunter, who though kind in feeling possessed much of the petty pride of the family, felt really quite glad that Miss Melville was acquainted with the difficulties in which the Sinclairs were involved, as it removed from her mind the fear which she had begun to entertain, that she could not know all the facts connected with their reduced circumstances ; or surely a person of her consequence would not have been so kindly familiar in her manner as she had been towards Charles : and as she herself had alluded to the story, Mrs. Hunter now fully enlarged upon it, and assumed a most kind interest in the fate of the family. But Miss Melville had already seen quite enough of the upstart pretensions of the young men, to be in the least degree blinded as to the real state of their feelings ; and it was with a sensation of relief to all the party that they heard her ask permission to order her carriage.

We must now follow Charles ; when the sound of the closing of the hall door reached his ears he felt an inward exultation at having escaped from the icy barrier by which he had been surrounded for the last two hours, and he stopped to look around him and to try to recover a little from the effects of the freezing

which he had been enduring : how well he remembered each object that met his eye ; that shrubbery walk, winding along behind the house, with its pleasant shade of evergreens, and sweet scented flowering shrubs, now bending beneath the weight of the light snow which so beautifully compensated for their absent flowers, where he with Flora and Spencer, in earlier days of childhood so often had passed hours and hours of mirthful happiness and enjoyment. And now "old Neptune" sees him, and springs from his kennel which is ensconced behind the portico, and recognizing Charles, bestows a sleepy, yawning sort of a welcome, for he has been taking a nap, and greatly enjoying the warm sunny corner in which his house has been placed. Charles stooped to caress him, and felt quite happy at being so well remembered by him ; but he will not stop longer lest the boys should come out, so with a "good bye Nep" he ran off at speed down the gravel path, and pursued his way as quickly as possible, for already the bright rays of the winter sun were departing and he had a long walk before him ; his spirits which in the morning had so wonderfully sustained him, so that the walk seemed nothing, had now sadly forsaken him, and he began to tire ere he reached the end of the first mile. However he trudged on meditating as he walked, on the causes of his late cool reception at Fairburn. Could they really be so mean, so utterly worldly, as to treat him differently merely because his situation in life was changed

by misfortune "not by disgrace," thought Charles. "No not by disgrace, thank God," and I cannot believe any people would be so despicable, no, I must have offended them, or perhaps they fancy that I have liked little Flo too much; well, she was kind as ever, I am glad of that for I always thought well of her.

In this way "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies" Charles pursued his way, resolving as he went not to wound his father's feelings by betraying how bitter had been his vexation at the unkind treatment he had experienced. A wintry evening was now closing in and in another half-hour it would be really dark; snow too began to fall in thick flakes around him and he was right glad to hold up his finger and make signals of distress to the first public conveyance-director that came in sight: creeping in at the door of the omnibus, he stumbled in the dark upon a gentleman's toe, and then nearly falling into his arms he rather awkwardly seated himself by his side and attempted an apology, but was checked a little by hearing a voice say "take, take care, young gentleman you should be careful." But when the light again streamed into the carriage he saw that this elderly gentleman looked kindly at him, and moreover, that he had no other companion. After a moment of silence, Charles ventured to speak to him.

"A cold evening, Sir."

"Very, very indeed: have you walked far to-day, hey?"

" Yes, I have been to Fairburn."

" Oh, oh Fairburn, a set of parvenues those Hunters, I should think so; I should think so, hey?" and he leant a little towards Charles.

But no assenting word or glance did Charles think it right to give: so he only said it was " a nice place, and when he lived near them they had been very kind to him."

This evidently pleased the old gentleman, and he smiled—yes, smiled encouragingly—while he said " I thought I was right."

Silent again for a moment Charles tried to recollect who his companion was; and then thought " Oh, yes, I remember, his name is Crosby. I recollect he used to follow Nurse sometimes, when she walked out with poor little Henry." But as this was all he knew of his neighbour, he was at a loss to understand his manner when he again addressed him saying, " Sinclair I think, hey? Charles Sinclair, hey? ah, I thought so, I remember, a little one too there was once, with dark curling hair,—oh yes, *I* remember !

But this allusion to his little brother affected poor Charles, and he attempted no reply.

" Oh, well, I see, I was wrong to mention him, but you must forgive me, young sir, for," and with a voice tremulous from emotion he added, "*I loved* that little child, and felt his loss when God removed the only creature that ever had for many years excited in my heart one feeling of tenderness or affection, for he was,—"



But at this moment Charles's strange companion roused himself, and with a hasty announcement that such feelings were "absurd" and "ridiculous," he resumed, as much as he could, of his usual manner, and for the remainder of the short journey scarcely spoke, except that once or twice Charles heard him mutter the words "Old blockhead," by which Charles supposed he was not on the happiest terms with himself.

When the carriage stopped for Charles to descend, Mr. Crosby held out his hand, and said "You think me an old fool, I daresay, eh? oh well—and so I am, yes!" But Charles only remembered the love he had so involuntarily expressed for his little brother, and warmly pressed the hand which Mr. Crosby offered, who said, as the door closed, "Ah! if *all* boys were like *you*."

What, in such a case, would have been Mr. Crosby's opinion of them was lost to posterity, for the door closed with a bang, and the guard vociferating "all right," the carriage rattled off and left Charles to find his way on foot through the street which led to Mr. Eveleigh's house; determining as he went to give as cheering an account of his day's adventures as if no annoyance had disturbed his pleasure; for in common with all this amiable family, his first object was to add as much as possible to the comfort and happiness of his parents and in no case to give them unnecessary pain or anxiety.



CHAPTER XI.

 KATE'S letter, which she had directed to Miss Hartop, at Mr. Wilde's, Glasgow, did not reach its destination for some days, as Miss Hartop had rather suddenly come to the resolution of venturing to withdraw herself from all the advantages of her situation in that family, where she had been expected to instruct all the six children, and not to expect any sort of leisure or recreation. This was too much, even for the quiet patience of the good Miss Hartop, and she was therefore, at the time Kate's letter was forwarded to her, quietly waiting at her nice snug lodgings, in Surrey, for the arrival of answers to sundry applications which she had made to several families, in the hope of obtaining a more comfortable situation. The little white cottage which she denominated her "Home," and to which she always resorted when fortune frowned upon her "honest industry," was situated close by the pretty village church of Greysbrook; and was shut out from the road by a white paling. The rooms which she occupied had been fitted up with the old furniture,

which came from the vicarage ; for she was the only daughter of the late incumbent, who had died there about twenty years before, and had left this child an orphan and unprovided for, so that at five-and-twenty poor Miss Hartop had been under the necessity of seeking her daily bread from the hands of strangers. And it was indeed a happy day for her when Mrs. Sinclair engaged her services in the care of her sweet children. For eight years Miss Hartop was freed from all care and anxiety, and found in Mrs. Sinclair a real and estimable friend.

As Kate grew up, and by her sweetness and excellence of disposition gave evidence of the right principles in which she had been educated, the feelings of her parents were more than ever drawn towards her kind instructress, and Miss Hartop was considered in the light of an esteemed friend by both Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair : and during the last year of her residence with them she had been admitted entirely to their confidence and companionship. It was therefore a sad change, when it was decided that her services must of necessity be dispensed with, and that consequently she was again obliged to seek the protection of strangers. It was on a fine, clear, frosty day, the very day on which Charles visited Fairburn, that Miss Hartop was just finishing her simple toilette in preparation for the breakfast hour, and had been wondering what time it was, and whether the Postman was arrived in the village, when a sudden knock at the small front door

induced her to peep down into the little passage below, to see who would present himself, when Sally opened the door ; and—" yes, there *is* the Postman, and there are three or four letters :" and Miss Hartop finishes the adjusting of the little brooch with Kate's hair in it as she descends the staircase, for she is more than usually in haste to possess the treasures which the Postman has just left, her dress was however neat to perfection, for this was so much her constant habit that no haste ever induced her even when quite alone to neglect this distinguishing mark of a lady : her pretty dark merino dress so closely fitting, and so nicely finished with its pretty little collar of fine work, fastened with the already mentioned brooch, and her small prettily arranged cap made Miss Hartop at forty really good looking. Her step was still light, and her movements even graceful : altogether no one could mistake her for other than a gentlewoman. She entered her nice little sitting room where her solitary breakfast was already prepared, and seizing her letters, seated herself close by the fire ; and, as all ladies do, she examined all the seals, post-marks, and other characteristics in the hope of finding, without the trouble of opening them, who were their authors. But no sign enlightened her, except that upon a close inspection she decided that "*that* was from dear Kate," but that she feared she was ill, for the hand was so unlike her usual style of writing ; and then it bore a strange post-mark. However, on opening it she exclaimed

" Yes, it is indeed from Kate Sinclair ; but what can have happened ? " and in silence and with many tears she read the long account of their recent misfortunes, and of Kate's determination to assist, if possible, in extricating her family from their difficulties : and when she read that part of the letter which asked her for assistance and direction in seeking some situation which would be suited to her inexperience, poor Miss Hartop was quite overpowered and mentally promised to use her best exertions to promote such a noble enterprise ; the letter was closed at last, and long and sadly did the kind governess meditate upon the fallen fortunes of the beloved family who had been so good, so kind to her in her younger days. The breakfast still remained untouched, till Sally the little maid, who acted as temporary servant of all work, opened the door, and asked, " should she take away the things ? but law ma'am, you look quite pale and ill, and you've eaten nothing, and no tea made, can I do anything for you, ma'am ? "

" No thank you, Sally, not just now, I will ring for you in a few moments."

Miss Hartop approached the table and commenced a pretended attack upon the bread and butter, made a little tea as quickly as possible, and then looking round she saw the other three letters which had excited her curiosity, but had been forgotten in the sorrow which Kate's communication had occasioned. As she sipped her tea, she opened and read them. The

first was from a merchant's lady in the city ; stating that she had five little girls who would require the constant care and attention of a "*residing* governess," who would also be expected to hear a little boy of seven all his lessons in Latin, and give him other instruction if required, but that possibly he would soon be sent to school : the governess must not expect the assistance of masters, and would not be allowed to leave the children alone at any time, but might have a fire in the school-room when they were all gone to bed. Miss Hartop sighed, as she contemplated the arduous task thus proposed, and hoped better things might yet await *her* and she opened the second letter. This proved to be from the lady of a medical man in London, who "begged to inform Miss Hartop that her children were all young, and would not require the whole of her time, and that therefore she would be expected to make herself useful in other employments as they might arise ; but that £80 per annum, were terms much too high, and proposing £60 per annum instead."

Again Miss Hartop sighed, *no* that would never do, she must refuse *that* at once. These letters had been opened without any consideration, for her mind was still full of the sorrows, and difficulties of her friends, and some little time elapsed before she examined the last of the letters which that morning's most eventful post had brought her : in this she found a most kind and lady-like proposal, from Lady Beauchamp, which

was in every respect exactly such as would best suit Miss Hartop; and her now deepening colour and speaking eyes evinced the real pleasure and satisfaction which filled her mind, as she read the kind and friendly terms in which this offer was conveyed.

Lady Beauchamp had two little girls of the respective ages of eight and ten, who would require Miss Hartop's attention for some hours each day, but whose kind and most respectable nurse would take charge of them when the hours for study were ended ; "there is" Lady Beauchamp continued, "a little helpless girl for whom I may occasionally petition a little portion of your time ; but it would be chiefly in the way of soothing and amusing her weary hours."

This letter concluded with a request that Miss Hartop would come to Granby Hall as soon as she could with perfect convenience to herself. Once more then she might hope for a comfortable home and find in those she served minds congenial with her own ; and she had long known Sir Edmund Beauchamp and had often heard of the amiable character of the lady whom he had married.

For some moments she paced her little room with feelings of happiness to which she had long been a stranger. She began too to consider the terms in which she should express to Lady Beauchamp the readiness with which she accepted the charge thus kindly offered to her, when suddenly the recollection of poor Kate at once changed the current of her thoughts, and

she almost blamed the selfish feeling which had thus, for a time, banished from her mind the sorrows and troubles of those she so truly loved, and turning to her writing-table she determined first to write to Kate and seek to soothe and comfort her, and again she opened the letter which had brought to her the sad intelligence of her misfortunes ; but in another moment she paused, and a bright smile illumined every feature, while she mentally resolved that for Kate she would endeavour to procure the home which but a moment before she had so thankfully accepted for herself. " Yes, it must be so, and dear Kate need never know it was offered to me. I am now so inured to difficulties that I can reconcile myself to almost any path of duty, while she, poor girl, is now for the first time exposed to all the cold and unkind neglects which too often await the poor and humble governess ; in Lady Beauchamp she will find a kind friend I have no doubt, and I shall have the blessing of feeling that I have been able in some measure to alleviate her first introduction to a life of unceasing responsibility and fatigue." Thus meditated the kind governess ; she thought not of the difficulties which this decision must of necessity entail upon herself, but put far away from her every consideration save that of being instrumental to the comfort and benefit of those to whom she felt so sincerely attached. Without a moment's hesitation she wrote to Lady Beauchamp, and told her with all gratitude for her intended kindness, that she had

other views for her own future course, but that she could most conscientiously recommend her friend and former pupil, Miss Sinclair, whose family had from sad and unfortunate events sunk into a state of undeserved distress. She then told Lady Beauchamp as much of her friend's circumstances as she thought would be correct and prudent, and expressed her high opinion of Kate's mind and principle, and ended by asking for a speedy answer to her request; when this letter was sealed and despatched Miss Hartop sat before her scanty fire in her little lonely room, and felt that inward sense of happiness which a kind and generous action never fails to bring as its reward: yet in her guileless simplicity she thought not of it as a meritorious sacrifice, for she was only too thankful that such an opportunity of proving her grateful affection to her former patrons had thus so fortunately presented itself; and she felt that if she could succeed in smoothing for poor Kate the thorny path which she seemed destined to pursue, she should be more than recompensed. She then determined not to write to Kate till she had received from Lady Beauchamp an answer to this application.

The long cold day passed wearily on, for time never appears so tardy in its flight as while we are waiting for the completion of any object which we have in view, and as a means of dissipating her own anxious thoughts, Miss Hartop resolved to go and visit some of her poor and sick neighbours, from whom she always

white neckerchief and apron ; her arms were covered with long black worsted mittens reaching to the elbows, and her black shoes with rather higher heels than might be deemed fashionable, were fastened with old silver clasps, the pride of poor Nanny's heart, for they had belonged to her father : her head was thrown back, and the pale calm features of the fine old woman were in a state of perfect repose, while a beautiful tortoiseshell cat of unusual size was also indulging in a quiet nap by her side. A slight movement caused by Miss Hartop roused old Nanny from her slumber, and sitting upright with a half awakened air she rested her hands upon the arms of her chair and looked slowly round, but on seeing her well-known and kind friend standing by her she uttered an exclamation of pleasure and said, " My dear good lady is it *you* ? why I was a dreaming I believe, for I felt quite frightened for a moment like ;—but dear me, Miss, you must be cold and my fire is almost out too." Slowly rising from her seat, Nanny placed some wood on the fire while her visiter ensconced herself cosily in the capacious chimney corner, and placed her cold feet on the bright brass fire-dogs which supported the billets of wood, took off some of her warm furs, produced her baskets from which she took some little parcels which contained tea and sugar and a nice warm flannel waist-coat to keep her old friend warm in the bitter frosty nights, and told her that she had just " finished it in time, for that the cold was intense and seemed likely to

continue so," and old Nanny was eloquent in her expressions of gratitude and thanks to her kind visiter.

"Oh Miss," she said, "what a comfort it is to have the pleasure of seeing you once more amongst us all ; your goodness to us reminds us all of happier times, when your dear and excellent father was with us and used to visit us and comfort us in all our troubles and afflictions ; and oh Miss, when I first returned to my parish after I had been abroad you know that time—well Miss, it was a season of sadness and I hope of penitence, and your dear Father kindly and gently led me to the only source from which we can find consolation in all our troubles ; yes Miss, he read the Scriptures to me daily, and when my health was restored he told me never to let go the hold which he hoped I had made upon the blessed Gospel truths, and to seek fresh strength to walk thenceforward in the path of duty; but oh, my dear young lady ! I am a poor frail creature, and my heart is still burthened with the remembrance of my past sins."

Miss Hartop listened with much interest, but knowing that the old woman was a really sincere Christian she talked to her encouragingly, and pointed out the only way by which the sins of all can be healed, telling her that forgiveness was promised to *all* who really repented their past offences, and then feeling from the energy and earnestness with which her old friend spoke that some particular sin or fault still filled her soul with heaviness, and that a free con-

fession even to a fellow creature is always salutary and hopeful, she gently approached the subject of her earlier years, thinking she should induce old Nanny to explain the cause of her hidden sorrow. "I remember once," she said, "you promised me, Nanny, to tell me some particulars of the time you passed in foreign countries, and if you are not feeling more weak than usual I wish you would do so now, for I came on purpose to sit an hour with you;—come put on your tea kettle, Nanny, and blow up your fire into a blaze, and then while I enjoy a comfortable warming of my cold hands, you can tell me some parts of your early history."

"Ah Miss, I could never bring myself to talk much upon that sad time, but I don't know how it is I feel such a comfort in talking to *you* that I will e'en try to tell you my tale, though it will cost me much pain and shame I know." Old Nanny rose, and filling her tea kettle set it on the fire, which now sent up a fitful blaze and threw a light into the far-off corner of that dark room, then with a sigh and evident struggle against her secret sorrow which rendered her thin features more than usually pale, she pressed her hands closely together on her knees and began to relate her little history.

"You see Miss, I was not always what I now appear, for I was the only child of a respectable farmer who lived in this parish, and when I was a very little child I was sent to a school and brought up with de-

cency and respectability till I was about nineteen. I was then engaged to be married to a fine young man, the son of a neighbour a farmer, as my father was, but much richer and in many ways better off, and it was thought, you see Miss, that my lover would inherit a very fair fortune whenever the old gentleman died; but from the first he seemed to think that unless father would be able to give me some money too, there would be difficulties put in our way. Well Miss, after we had been engaged about two years my dear father died, and it was discovered that he had left me wholly without any means of subsistence; for you see Miss, he had been a speculator, and though I had no suspicion of such a thing, he was insolvent at the time of his death. Well Ma'am, though I believe James would gladly have fulfilled his promises his father would never hear of it, and I was young and proud then and so we quarrelled and parted never to meet again in this world, for James went away to sea and was soon after lost in a dreadful storm off the coast of Spain; and I, ah yes! I *did* mourn for him, Miss, as though he had been my own husband, and for a long while I was very poorly in body and mind. At this time I was living with my grandmother who took care of me and tended me with a mother's love, but soon afterwards she died, and I felt that my only way of getting my living would be to go into service in a gentleman's family. Your father knew me and gave me recommendations, and at last I obtained a

situation in which as a nursemaid I lived for many years with credit and in comfort. I was four and twenty when I first entered that house, Miss, and I never changed my home for nearly fourteen years; but as the children were then grown up, my mistress procured me an excellent place as head servant in the house of a gentleman who had lately returned from the West Indies, and had brought home a young wife who was, I believe, a Portuguese lady; however she was a foreigner and spoke English but indifferently. She was very pretty and had a sweet expression in her soft dark eye, and her long black hair hung in bright and beautiful curls down each side of her oval face, which was rather darker than our English ladies. My master was many years older than she was, but he was doatingly fond of her, and always very tender and gentle towards her, seeming more like a father in his manner to *my* thought, but that was his tender way. Well Miss, when first I went to live with them there was no child, and I think Master coveted one more than any earthly good or comfort, but my mistress was not in good health and we all thought she would not long be amongst us. About a year after I entered their service the doctors thought a sea voyage would favour the poor young lady, and as her father had just died and left my master some property in the Brazils, it was settled that she should go with him to take possession and make arrangements for it's being properly managed, and I was to go with

them. Well, I went :—but perhaps I am tiring you, Miss, with my long story ? ”

“ Oh no,” replied Miss Hartop, “ I am much interested ; pray go on ; and so you went with them—well ? ”

“ Yes Miss, I went with them, and we had a safe and prosperous voyage, and I was delighted with the novelties all about me ; but you are book-learned, Miss, so I won’t stop to tell you of all the wonders of the mighty ocean that we passed. Well, we arrived in that strange foreign country at last, and master took a house near a place called St. Sebastian, the largest town in *Rio Jannuary*, and there we found everything wonderful strange, and the language and all was puzzling to my English ways ; still, I loved my dear young mistress, and when at last it pleased God to send them their hearts’ desire, in a beautiful little boy, I was truly happy ;—yet,—oh Miss, my heart is almost broken when I think upon my wicked selfishness.” For a few moments Old Nanny wept in silence, leaving Miss Hartop quite unable to understand the cause of her sudden emotion. Presently however she roused herself, and begging pardon for the interruption thus pursued her story :—“ Well, all must be told. The dear child grew rapidly, and for two years he was the joy and delight of us all, and if my dear Mistress’s health had been good my Master would have been truly happy ; but she became more and more delicate, and it was thought that she could never bear

the long voyage back to England, so we were kept on and on at that strange place always hoping that she would get stronger soon : however at last Master's affairs required his immediate presence in England and go he must, so the doctors told him to keep up a good heart and that as his dear lady had now in some degree improved they hoped when the more favourable season should set in she would certainly be able to follow him though it would probably kill her if she returned with him at that time. So at last, Miss, he made up his poor mind to go and to leave *me* in charge of my dear Mistress and sweet master Herbert.—*Me!* oh *why* was I left ? — Oh, Miss Hartop, now you shall hear my sad, sad fault. Well at last he went, and a terrible sad parting it was ; but neither of them thought what an endless one it was to prove. When he was gone my dear lady made every effort to recover her spirits and took every remedy that they proposed for her improvement in health, but all in vain and in two months just when I had been directed to take her to England she expired in my arms and left the darling of her heart to the care of me and the native nurse Maytee, who had always assisted me in taking charge of him ; and as I never could understand any language but my own I was truly glad to have this woman who knew all that were spoken in that outlandish place. The gentleman whom Master had left to act as his agent during his absence gave all the orders for my poor Lady's fune-

ral himself, and without waiting for directions from my Master he determined that I should go directly to England with dear master Herbert and take Maytee with me, and as soon as possible we embarked on board a trading vessel. My dear little charge was very happy and liked being on board ship very much and would sit for hours on my lap looking over the ship's side and watching the white foam which followed on our track. He was a beautiful child, Miss, with very dark brilliant eyes, and very long dark curls like his mother's, and every one on board seemed to admire him, though, except the captain, myself and Maytee no one knew whose child he was. We had only been at sea about a fortnight, when one day while we were all below a sudden storm arose, with thunder, lightning and wind. In less than half an hour our sails were split to pieces. The sailors said it commenced from south-east but the wind shifted to the north and we were driven along like chaff before the wind. The sea now rose in tremendous billows around us and the vessel was now as it were up to the heavens and then down to the depths of the seas below. All was terror and confusion. In another half-hour the sailors cut away the mainmast, which fell with a tremendous crash, making the ship quiver from stem to stern. Oh Miss Hartop, pity me, but do not hold to my self-condemnation. My strength and spirits seemed to fail me and I turned suddenly faint, when Maytee took from my arms my precious charge. In another mo-

ment the long boat was lowered ; the captain gave orders that as many as with safety could get on board her should lose no time in doing so. One of the ship's officers seized me by the shoulder and hurried me on to the edge of the sinking ship, and oh Miss, I thought only of my own danger ; I *forgot* my precious child, and poor Maytee unfortunately but ill understood what the English sailors said and did not—but oh I don't purtend to tell how it happened, but when we were all crowded into the boat they put off, and in an instant we were at the top of a crest of a tremendous wave, and *there* in the deep trough of the sea I saw poor Maytee on the deck of the ill-fated vessel with my charge held up in agony towards me !—I wished I had died.—I was frantic ;—but it was of no use, and poor Maytee and the precious child were lost ! Oh, Ma'am ! my dear lady, forgive me : ” and poor Nanny sunk back in her chair quite exhausted with the overpowering recollections of that dreadful day. When she recovered she concluded her sad tale by saying that the poor sufferers in the boat after some hours of extreme peril were saved by a vessel homeward bound, and that on her safe arrival in England she had come to her native village, but that she had never ventured to see her injured master, who had ever since, as she had heard, been at times almost bereft of his senses and was always very strange in all his ways :—she added, “ Oh, Miss, it would be a comfort to me now to see him and ask his forgiveness, but I

fear I shall never see him more. Your dear kind father, Miss Hartop, knew all my sad story, and during his life, as you know, he never let me want; but he died, and since that I have known much sickness and poverty; but I bless the Giver of all good who has thus comfortably provided for me in my old age, and I do hope, my dear lady, He will mercifully deign to forgive my past sins, and receive me into His glorious kingdom hereafter."

Old Nanny covered her face with her apron and wept in silence; for a time her kind and considerate visiter would not interrupt her tears, assured as she was that the source from which they sprung would bring a healing balm to her wounded and self convicted spirit. In a few moments, however, she ventured to offer some words of consolation, and to assure the poor old woman that she felt not a doubt that a fault so evidently the result of weakness and want of presence of mind and so unceasingly repented, would find pardon and forgiveness at the throne of grace, and then she comforted her by reading from the Holy Book those precious promises of forgiveness which are there offered to all sincere penitents who rest on their Saviour's merits for the remission of sins. She then gradually turned to other topics of conversation, though she felt much disposed to ask many questions on the subject of the interesting story to which she had been listening; she observed that Nanny had not mentioned the name of the family of whom she had been

speaking, but as it had probably been purposely avoided, Miss Hartop with intuitive delicacy withheld enquiries which might add to the poor old woman's sorrow. After sitting a few more minutes she rose, and taking poor Nanny's hand, said, "I must leave you now, my good old friend, but I will not do so without giving you my assurance that my mind is much more filled with pity than with blame. I can assure you I most fully enter into all your troubled feelings, and I will soon come again and stay with you a longer time. She then left the room followed by the grateful thanks of the old woman.

As she passed through the court yard she met some of the poor people whom she had intended to visit, but as her mind was now much occupied with the strange story which had just been related to her, she spoke kindly to them and telling them she should come and see them on the next day, passed on. The evening was intensely cold and a bright silvery moon lighted Miss Hartop's homeward steps, the events of the past day absorbed her thoughts, and it was with a feeling of real comfort and satisfaction that she entered her own quiet little sitting room where with closely shuttered and curtained windows and with warmly slippers feet placed on a foot stool before the fire, we will leave her to sip her coffee and indulge in a long and solitary reverie on the occurrences of the last few hours, so fraught with exciting and painful interest.



CHAPTER XII.

CHARLES'S visit to the Hunters gave rise to a great many questions on the following morning, but having assured them that Mr. and Mrs. Hunter were very kind, he took refuge from a further discussion of the subject by describing the strange old Gentleman in the omnibus. Mrs. Sinclair said, "Surely it must have been that old Gentleman that nurse used to tell us always contrived to pass her in her walks when she used to have our poor little darling Henry with her." Kate perfectly remembered that she had often remarked this old Gentleman, and she was on the point of saying that she really did believe that same old Gentleman came into her room at Belmont on the day of the sale, but checked herself, as she never in her Father's presence alluded to the occurrences of that day; she called Honor and asked her if she had ever heard nurse mention this Gentleman. "Och thin, Miss Kate, I have, but I niver seen him. Nurse used to say 'twas mighty fond he seemed of the blessed babby, and often he used to walk close along

behind her and spake of the purty bright eyes, as would be peeping over her shoulher at the quare ould man, oh, but thim eyes wor bright as the stars in Heaven."

"And do you know the Gentleman's name, Honor?"

"Sorra a bit I knows of him, Miss, but shure Nurse does; at laste I heard her say 'twas a name she niver could recollect, by which manes she kept it wholly to herself; but I beg yer pardon, Miss Kate, I think I hear that Scotch Lady coming up the stairs, and will I go an ask her to come in?" This was said in order to give Mrs. Sinclair time to escape, as the mention of her little one had painfully affected her, and Honor's quick perception taught her that at such a moment the arrival of a stranger might be undesirable, and the hint was taken, Honor dexterously avoiding admitting the visiter till her Mistress had safely reached the inner room.

When Miss Moffat entered the children could scarcely help smiling, so strange was her appearance, for as usual she had put on all the smart things she could collect, and as she stood by the side of Kate in her pretty modest morning dress she seemed herself to be quite struck with the contrast which she presented, and mentally decided that, "'Deed then Miss Senclar's dress is in muckle better teeste than mine, an I sall mak a grate change in my garments as sune as I get the means to do it." However, this was but a passing thought; and she approached the party with

much respect and evident timidity. Mr. Sinclair placed a chair for her and took her offered hand, and entered into conversation with her so kindly and pleasantly that Miss Moffat's heart was quite warmed and won, and she proceeded to announce the object of her visit. "I'm thinking ye see, Maistress Senclar, that ye are nae that comfortable here in this far up apartment, an I dinna ken hoo ye can a' manage, but I feel sure ye canna be unco cosy; sae as the lodgers are going awa next week ye are kindly welcome to the use o' thae rooms." This kind proposal, though duly appreciated, was firmly but kindly declined by Mr. Sinclair, who could not consent to thus depriving the good Scotchwoman of half her means of subsistence; and as he could not remunerate her for the accommodation he told her that for the present they did not really require such an arrangement. "Atweel, ye'll just think anent the matter and let me know yer wishes." And then, to turn the subject, she began to admire the "twa sweet little girls:" but as her remarks were not calculated to lower these young ladies in their own estimation they were soon dismissed, and Kate asked her to tell them something of the "pretty little Scotch girl with the golden hair;" this was a favourite theme with Miss Moffat and she told them some portion of the child's story, reserving only such points as reflected credit on herself, and when she made her parting curtsy she left a most favourable impression on the minds of all present.

As soon as she was gone Mr. Sinclair told Kate that he much wished to have some conversation with her, and as the day was bright and frosty he proposed that they should go and take a long walk together: to this Kate readily assented, and putting on her warmest dress and drawing a thick veil over her face she took her father's arm and together they walked and closely and earnestly they conversed for more than two hours: the result of this confidence appeared in the resolutions which were announced by Mr. Sinclair as they sat round their little fire, when the younger children were gone to bed. Mrs. Sinclair had not yet been told that Kate had decided on seeking the situation of a Governess; it was a very painful effort to both her and her father to introduce so painful a subject; yet knowing that although of a timid and unenergetic character she was actuated and guided by truly Christian principles, they felt assured that she would soon become reconciled to any path of duty however painful; and they were not mistaken: her weakened spirits required a little support when she first heard that her darling girl was to leave her, and the sudden rush of a mother's fears came into her heart, filling it with all those nameless anxieties which mothers alone can feel. Soon however she derived comfort from the thoughts of her noble girl's bright and estimable character which must secure for her kind friends, and whose steady Christian principles would keep her safe from danger even amidst the difficulties and temptations of

the busy world : but she had yet more to learn, for Mr. Sinclair had resolved on employing his talents as a Painter for the benefit of his family, while Mrs. Sinclair might, by devoting her whole attention to the younger children, prepare them for the situation of governesses as soon as they should be at an age for such a responsible office. Meanwhile Charles should seek to obtain some employment by which he might be enabled to maintain himself. Long and earnestly were all these plans considered, and ere they retired for the night each sought in fervent prayer the aid they needed to enable them to fulfil the duties which they had respectively undertaken.

Some days now elapsed, which bringing with them no new incident enabled the Sinclairs to arrange and bring into action the plans to which we have alluded. Already is the easel placed in its most advantageous position ; Mr. Sinclair is busily engaged in painting a lovely summer scene, and as the picture glows and brightens beneath his vivifying touch, it almost banishes from his mind the sad remembrance that the “ Summer of his life is overcast,” and that the clouds of poverty and sorrow are fast closing around all he loves on earth ; the feeling too that he is by active exertion using the best efforts to dissipate these clouds tends to cheer and comfort him, and by degrees restores his mind to a state of almost happiness. Once more pleasant and even cheerful conversation and busy employment lend new life and vigour to the hearts of all,

and Kate with a feeling of thankfulness, perceives that the fury of the storm has passed away. She now silently and quietly exerted herself to prepare for leaving her now almost comfortable home, and to be ready to accept the first situation which might be offered her. She endeavoured as much as possible to conciliate the good Miss Moffat, from whose kind and friendly disposition she hoped much advantage might arise; and she so won the good Scotch lady's heart, that she declared to little Maggie, who was her only companion, that " 'Deed then Miss Senclar was just the varra pattern o' perfaction, and that the sight o' her sweet bonnie face was amangst her daily blessings; but I fear she canna be owr that happy, puir young leddy, for I am sure she has been weel cared for an weel brought up, and leetle used to sic a life of trouble and anxiety; but she is sae calm an gentle that she bears a' wi' a thankfu' spirit that will aye find its reward: and I'm thinking I might e' tak a lesson fra her in mony ways, 'specially anent the matter of the putting on mair seemly attire, an I'll no wear them gaudy duds again.' " The latter part of this speech was in soliloquy, as Maggie had departed from her side before its conclusion; but Miss Moffat, who was really in earnest, lost no time in removing as much as possible the lappits and gewgaws which she had hitherto deemed the best proof which she could afford the world of her bygone days of genteelity. Kate was pleased as well as surprised at the reformation which had taken place in

her appearance; but little Maggie, who was used to her finery and rather approved it, said, " 'Deed then I'm maist afeard my dear Leddy's ganging daft like puir auld Granddad, an I'm unco fashed to see her tak on sae wi Miss Kate:'" by which we may infer that the little Scotch lassie had a spice of jealousy in her youthful heart!





CHAPTER XIII.

CHISTMAS was now fast approaching, and the young people could scarcely refrain from expressing their regrets, when a comparison would arise in their minds, between the circumstances of the present season and those of former days. Still, for their parents' sake, they would not even to each other give utterance to their painful thoughts, and it was with heartfelt pleasure that Kate one morning heard the following conversation between her two little sisters, who still shared her room with her.

"Rosy," said Emily, "are you awake, dear?"

"Yes; I have been staying quietly thinking, because I thought you and Kate were asleep. But hush, don't wake her, for I want to speak to you. Don't you know, Emily, to-morrow will be Christmas day? And don't you remember how we used to have the hall dressed with holly? and all Kate's school girls used to come and sing a beautiful carol, all standing round the pretty tree which the gardener used to put there after papa and mamma were gone to bed? Oh Emily! I

declare I quite long for my dear, dear home again,
don't you?"

"Yes, my darling Rosy, I do indeed long for it sometimes; but then you know, dear, we must not vex them all by looking sad and gloomy; and then you know if they think *we* are happy and merry they will be cheerful too perhaps. But I really cannot bear to see dear Katey losing all her pretty colour, and trying to please us all. Never does she complain of us, even when we are noisy or troublesome; so now do let us try to follow her example, and be good and useful, and forget that we ever knew happier days than these."

Rosa was quite ready to promise all that was required of her, and already the little cloud which had for a moment overshadowed her naturally sweet disposition had vanished, and by Emily's good counsel the sunshine of her heart was restored. She then eagerly confided her important secret, which for a moment had been forgotten. In a small ornamental box, which the children called their bank, there had accumulated some little savings of their own, and Rosa now proposed that all this treasure should be committed to the care and judicious management of "dear Kate," that she might be able to purchase some evergreens and holly, and make some other preparations, which might assist to enliven the solitary room to which they were now so much confined. After much whispering and settling of these innocent plans, Kate, who had more

than once reminded them that she was not sleeping, was at last appealed to as to the best means of carrying into effect their proposed embellishments ; and it was agreed that Charles should be employed to buy a quantity of holly with “ plenty of beautiful red berries ;” and that after “ Papa and Mamma ” were gone to rest they would all meet and decorate the old studio, and that one of Charles’s first purchases should be some brightly burning wood, that they might have a blazing fire to greet them on that cold Christmas morning. Little Rosa now suggested to Emily that it would be better to avoid saying one word about *last* Christmas, but think this new way of spending it quite as charming and delightful. And in the glow of young and generous feeling these children found a pure happiness, far exceeding all that could be purchased by wealth or luxury.

Kate fully appreciated these right and good feelings, yet she offered no injudicious praises, and the children only knew by her loving kiss and gentle smile that she was pleased with their sweet conduct.

Charles was soon admitted to their counsels, and both he and Honor gladly promised their ready assistance ; and having gained Miss Moffat’s consent, Charles’s sleeping room was soon filled with all that they required for the decoration of the studio, and many pretty and ingenious devices were formed from the bright leaves and berries of the holly.

While all were thus busily engaged, a sudden and

loud knock at the hall door summoned little Maggie, and she presently returned with a face beaming with pleasure and said, " Oh, Maister Charles, that black-looking woman has just been here again, an she wad na wait tull I ca't ye; an she's gone away wis an unco quick step, that I'm thinking ye'd hae som trouble to o'erget her, an she's left siccan a great basket on the ha' floor." Out ran all the young party, and there they indeed found a large basket, directed to Master Charles Sinclair, containing, as they found upon inspection, an abundance of good things ; a fine turkey, wine, some oranges, and many other acceptable presents, including cakes and even toys for the young ones, with a store of amusing books, but without any note by which they could discover the kind friend who thus endeavoured to cheer the first season of penury and privation.

The children's little arrangements were at last completed, and the room really looked quite picturesque, with its dark walls enlivened by wreaths of bright evergreens ; and when the party assembled themselves round the cheerful fire in the morning, no feeling but that of thankfulness for the mercies and comforts by which they were still surrounded held a place in their hearts. The greetings on that day were more than ever loving and affectionate, and a holy peace and calm filled all their minds. The services of the Church were duly attended by them all, and a day of quiet, rational enjoyment succeeded ; though when the well

provided table induced the necessity of divulging the secret of the mysterious present, Mr. Sinclair expressed some compunction at having thus a second time incurred an obligation to a stranger. He soon however consoled himself by the thought, which had more than once occurred to his mind, that his brother had possibly heard of his distress, and had thus in an eccentric way endeavoured to lighten the privations of his children. Resolving therefore not to lessen the pleasure which they so well deserved, he wisely forbore from dwelling on any subject of dissatisfaction.

Poor Miss Moffat had been kindly invited to join their fireside circle, but with "muckle thanks" she had excused herself, "as she had passed her 'Christmas tide' this mony a year wi' an auld Scottish cousin wha lived in an adjoining street, and on this occasion her little protégée, Maggie, was to bear her company."

Late in the evening Mr. Sinclair drew his children round him, and thanked them all with much emotion for the unselfish spirit which they had evinced on every occasion since their sad change of circumstances; he gladdened their hearts by the assurance that he had experienced more *true* happiness on that day than he ever remembered to have enjoyed in the bright days of their prosperity. And thus the "Christmas day" which all had feared would prove one of painful and sad recollections only, had passed in peace and tranquillity, brightened by the sweet affection and loving exertions of these truly excellent children.





CHAPTER XIV.



N the following morning, as they were all seated at their various employments, Honor entered the room, and passing round to Kate's side, she placed a letter in her hand. Kate's before bright cheek becomes deadly pale as she recognises Miss Hartop's seal and direction; and without a word of answer to the various demands as to "Who it was from," &c. she hastily rushed to her little room, and closing the door she read the following letter: "I cannot describe to you, my dearest friend, the sorrow which filled my heart when I read your sad account of your dear father's recent misfortune, and I quite longed to be with you all in your affliction, but that was impossible and you will perhaps have wondered that I did not more immediately answer your letter, but in consequence of my having left Durham I did not receive it for some days. I have waited since a short time that I might tell you the result of an application which I had made to Lady Beauchamp, of whom I knew enough to ensure the conviction that in her house you, my dearest Kate, would receive the kindest consideration.

This morning's post has, I am thankful to tell you, brought me a most favourable answer, and I will not lose a moment in telling you the contents of her letter." Miss Hartop then proceeds to detail to Kate the particulars of her correspondence with Lady Beauchamp, and then adds, " Although, my dearest Kate, you will believe that I fully sympathise with you in the feelings which the separation from all your family must occasion, and can enter into all your anxieties at the thoughts of the arduous responsibilities before you, yet I feel such perfect confidence in your high sense of duty, that I feel assured you will soon become reconciled to all which at first may be irksome and painful; and I doubt not you will speedily gain the esteem and regard of your excellent *Host* and *Hostess*, for in their house you will be treated almost as a visiter. Do not then, dear girl, alarm yourself, but meet Lady Beauchamp with full confidence that in her you will find one of mind congenial with your own. I am myself going into the family of a merchant in London, and I trust we may ere long meet again." Miss Hartop added many messages of affection and sympathy, and closed her letter by informing Kate that her salary for the present would be £80 per annum, and that Lady Beauchamp hoped to see her as soon as she could with convenience to herself leave home.

After reading this letter, which cost her many tears of mingled feeling, poor Kate sat for some time with her face buried in her hands, and in silence sought the only aid which could enable her to meet with resignation and



fortitude the sad separation from her family, which she felt must so immediately take place. Rousing herself however from these painful thoughts, she sought to obtain a calm and cheerful appearance before she met her parents ; and as she paced her little room, she tried to think only of the benefit which would arise to all by this self-sacrifice. She thought herself ungrateful so to have received an intimation which ought to be a subject for thankfulness : but again and again did the thought of leaving all she loved subdue her newly acquired firmness, and it was long before she could summon courage to seek her father, and with assumed cheerfulness place before him the letter which had thus excited her feelings.

We will pass over the few days which intervened, days of sorrow which all must feel when about to part from those so dearly loved, but which were endured by all with constancy and firmness, evincing the excellent principles by which they were actuated. Kate made many little arrangements for the comfort of her family ; one of her first objects being to engage the rooms which Miss Moffat had offered for their use, and for which she undertook to remunerate her. Much good advice too she gave to her little darling sisters, who with tears promised to be obedient and useful. Honor too, the good faithful Honor, was kindly reminded of her new responsibilities during Kate's absence ; in short, nothing was omitted which her tender careful forethought could secure for the comfort of her parents. Poor Honor could scarcely

compose herself sufficiently to receive these needful directions, which she continually interrupted by some new expression of her sorrow. "Och Miss, an shall we be deprived of yer swate company entirely? An will we be left like pillicans in the wilderness, let alone the owls in the desert, or the sparrow on the house top. What'll become of us? Mavourneen, bad manners to me, to think of calling the likes of ye by sich familiarity. But eh, Miss Kate, ye're dearer to me than all the world, an whar will I find any comfort at all when ye're gone far away? An all for what? Shure the lady might tache her own children, but its little she'd school em as you will. Well, Miss, I ax yer pardon, but ye'll forgive my fools of tares, for its mighty tazing they do always be. And now, Miss Kate, ye know yer brother told to us about Robinson Cooso, and how he sent them things by his craft; well I suppose, Miss, for the credit of ould Ireland, ye will believe that we have good people of the same quality: and one of them did be sending a thrifle. But bad cess to me, I never did do their bidding; but ye'll find it now upon yer table in yer room." And there, to Kate's great surprise, she found her own favourite little workbox, which as the present of a kind friend she had so much and often regretted losing. But no art or entreaty would induce Honor to betray the secret of her lover; nor could Kate induce her to confess how this little treasure had come into her possession.



CHAPTER XV.

KT was on a bright, clear, frosty morning that Kate commenced her journey into — shire, and the rapid travelling which in these days transports the traveller almost as by magic to the place of 'destination, had the usual effect of enlivening and cheering her spirits, so that by the time she entered the carriage which was to convey her across the country to Granby Hall, her countenance no longer bore evidence of the sad parting which had so painfully excited her feelings in the morning, and although still very pale, she looked almost as lovely as usual; a drive of about two miles brought her to the Lodge at the entrance of Sir Edmund Beauchamp's grounds, which was a remarkably ornamental building surrounded with evergreens, and in summer by a profusion of sweet flowers. An elderly woman in a snow white cap and apron came out at the approach of the carriage, and opening the handsome gates admitted it to the beautiful park which surrounded the house; as it wound its way along the principal road Kate observed with delight the

beautiful grouping of the superb beech and cedar trees. As she approached the mansion, which was of Elizabethan structure, she perceived that the grounds rose suddenly behind it and covered with noble trees formed a delightful shelter from the cutting blasts of the north-east winds, while in front a sloping lawn of the smoothest turf extended to the margin of a fine piece of water, on which two or three swans were majestically sailing and on whose bosom, now gilded by the fast declining rays of the setting sun, the house and its surrounding objects were reflected. At the door of entrance stood a handsome carriage, which, as Kate instantly thought, had probably just brought some visitors, and she felt a new alarm lest she should be obliged to meet strangers, but in a moment a sense of her now dependent situation brought the conviction that in all probability she would be immediately directed to the school-room or to her own apartment; short time however remained for speculation, the carriage turned away from the door and Kate's post-boy, who for a moment had checked his approach, now drove up and rung a furious peal at the bell, startling the now shrinking girl and exciting a thrill of timid anxiety which sent a blush to her before pale cheek. A footman instantly appeared and opening the door of the carriage offered an elbow to assist her in her descent and with a respectful air ushered her into an enclosed porch, the inner door of which was of plate glass; this was opened by a middle aged man

whose plain dress bespoke him a principal domestic, and who having enquired her name, preceded her across a lofty and well carpeted hall, where a large fire composed of heavy logs of wood blazed in the wide old fire-place, and by its bright and cheerful light brought into bold relief the beautiful specimens of sculpture with which the darkly wainscotted hall was richly ornamented. Quickly however Kate followed her conductor and tried to quell the nervous mauvaise honte which for the first time in her life had for some moments oppressed her; the servant now opened a door on the left hand and announcing "Miss Sinclair," she found herself in a large and handsome library. A glance sufficed to show her that this room was indeed the very beau ideal of comfort. Books, drawings, portfolios of rare prints and every arrangement for writing or reading in the most perfect ease and enjoyment met her eye; a large oriel window with its deep recess, gave a peculiar character to this room and the rays of the setting sun brightened every object around her; the floor was covered with a rich Persian carpet, and, as in the hall, a large wood fire lent its cheering light and warmth. Standing in front of this fire were a lady and gentleman, the former having just returned from a drive had not yet laid aside her close bonnet and well furred mantle, but was when Kate entered relating with much animation of manner some recent occurrence to the gentleman who, with his newspaper in his hand, was looking kindly and earnestly into the

sparkling face of the narrator ; both however started on hearing Miss Sinclair's name, and Sir Edmund—for it was he—came forward and with a kindly extended hand greeted her with so much of friendly courtesy that she at once regained her self possession, and when still retaining the hand which he had taken he led her forward to meet Lady Beauchamp, she felt quite inclined to return the gentle pressure of her soft hand and to repay with a smile the bright look of welcome which accompanied the kindly assurance that “ She was very glad to see her and felt quite obliged by her having so immediately acceded to her wishes.” All three now drew near the fire and after a few moments of pleasing conversation Sir Edmund said, “ Well now, my dear Gertrude, I have no doubt Miss Sinclair will feel quite disposed to take some little rest and refreshment after her long journey, but I hope we shall prevail on her to dine with us to-day, if she is not too much fatigued;” and then, with a slight inclination of his head to Kate, he left the room; and in a few moments a servant brought in a tray with wine and biscuits, of which Kate partook slightly, but as her still pallid cheek betrayed to her kind observer that all was not yet peace within, she kindly avoided entering on any subject which might agitate or distress her, and very soon proposed a visit to the play-room, where she said, “ I dare say we shall find all my children, for I am sorry to tell you, Miss Sinclair, we have of late had little use for our study, as for some months past I have been advised to give my little girls their

entire freedom ; they suffered severely in the summer from a sad fever, and have in consequence been very weak, but they are now quite recovered, and as they possess much docility of disposition, I trust they will repay your kind care and attention." On entering the play-room two very attractive looking little girls came forward to greet their Mamma, who told them she had brought them a new friend who had kindly undertaken to instruct them and who would, she had no doubt, soon win their affection ; the children held out their little hands to Kate and received her with that frank good breeding which is always found in children who have been well educated.

Henrietta, the eldest, was a beautiful little girl of about ten, tall of her age, and elegant in her carriage and movements ; whilst little Gertrude, who was two years younger, still retained an almost babylike appearance, and was as fair and sunshiny a creature as could well be imagined—the idol of her father, and perhaps a little more petted and indulged by him than was desirable. A neat young woman was seated by a table at work. She rose however on Lady Beauchamp's entrance and curtseying respectfully left the room. Lady Beauchamp presently said, " And where is nurse, Henrietta ? for I see you have had Bennet sitting with you ? is she gone to the nursery with Alice ? "

" Yes, dear Mamma, for poor Ally cried and looked so tired that nurse said she required rest, and they left us about half an hour ago."

" Ah, Miss Sinclair," Lady Beauchamp said, " I

must interest you for my poor little sick girl, and entreat you to bear with patience all her little fancies, for she is in a sad state of suffering. But you must be tired now, and perhaps you will prefer waiting to be introduced to her till to-morrow."

Kate said she wished much to see the dear little child immediately, and assured Lady Beauchamp that it would give her real pleasure to use her best efforts to cheer and amuse her.

Lady Beauchamp then led the way to the nursery which was adjoining the play-room, and as she entered she said in a soft gentle tone, "Alice, darling, I have brought a kind young lady to see you, shall she come and sit by you?"

"Is she a pretty lady, Mamma, and will she speak gently to me as you do?"

"Why you shall judge for yourself, my love, if you like to see her."

Kate now quietly approached the poor child, who looked up with eager anxious eyes to scan the features of the stranger, who was she felt assured her sisters' new governess. Kate's eyes filled with tears as she contemplated the little suffering being before her. On a sort of bed-chair which moved on large and easily-rolling castors, extended at full length and white as marble, lay the little girl for whom her kindly sympathies had been demanded, and by her side, anxious to forestall her every wish and obey every look, stood a respectable-looking nurse, whose pitying eyes seldom

wandered from her helpless charge. Long and earnestly poor Alice gazed upon Kate's countenance, then holding out one little thin hand she said; "Come close by me, for I am *sure* I shall like you very much."

Kate gladly obeyed this summons, and taking the little hand she kissed it so tenderly, so gently, that again the child repeated, "Oh I am *sure* I shall like you, and I will try to be good and then you will stay with me, won't you?—but tell me your name."

"My name is Kate, and I already feel that I shall love you very dearly;" and kneeling by her couch she kissed the little pallid face and gently stroked her hands, while Lady Beauchamp was thankfully observing the deep interest which her poor child had already excited in the heart of her young companion, and mentally indulging a hope, that by judicious care and management even yet the life of the little Alice might be spared and her health restored. In a few moments she said, "And now, my dear Alice, you will let Miss Sinclair leave you, as I am *sure* she must be fatigued, for she has travelled a long distance to-day, and she will come and see you again to-morrow."

"Oh, dear Mamma, I *cannot* spare her; and I must call her Kate:—*may* I?" she asked in such a touching tone that Kate's lip quivered as she said, "Oh yes, dear child, pray do, and remember I shall never allow you to call me by any other name." And now with an affectionate kiss she left her and followed Lady Beauchamp, who told her as they passed

along the gallery which led from the children's apartments, that this poor child had two years before injured her back, and that she had never recovered, but that though still a sad sufferer, she was assured by her physician that the case was not a hopeless one, and that she might and probably would ultimately recover, if she could be induced to submit to the needful restraint and discipline; and gladly did Kate promise to devote her leisure to the poor little invalid. Lady Beauchamp now turned into a comfortable and nicely-arranged room, which she told Kate would be hers, and that she would find a small sitting-room within which would also be at her disposal; then looking at her watch she said, "but it is quite time to prepare for dinner, and when you require assistance, Miss Sinclair, Bennet will attend you,"—and with a kind smile she left the room.

On finding herself alone Kate's first impulse was to throw herself into a chair by the fire and to give vent in a sudden flood of tears to the mingled feelings which oppressed her. For a few moments she wept without restraint, but as she began to regain her composure what a tide of tender recollections rushed through her mind, bringing before her in rapid succession the events of the last long day:—the breakfast in that strange old room, with the chilling sensations of early winter morning; her mother's sweet anxious face and scarcely-restrained tears; her father's assumed cheerfulness, which his trembling hand and sudden start so entirely

defeated ; the children's sorrowing looks ; and then dear Charles—oh ! still she feels the pressure of his loving arm round her slender waist, and hears again his whispered words of hope and comfort ; poor Honor, too, with her loud and eloquent lament, and the blessing invoked from “Hivin upon her dare sweet innocent head ;” then came the hurried drive to the station—the ringing bell—the shrieking engine—the hasty adieu, and then the sudden starting of the train leaving her in doubt whether she had shaken hands at parting with poor Charles, whose tearful eyes betray that his boyish heart refuses to obey his manhood’s pride :—soon she had lost sight of the beloved faces, and then followed dreamy recollections of sweeping rapidly along, of soon passing another station, of catching a glimpse of some people whom she felt sure were the Daltons and with them little Fido, and this imagination occupied some little time but was never satisfactorily solved. However it was a pleasure even to think of having seen the “dear little pet” and as the sorrowful reminiscences began to yield to more cheering visions she dwelt with much pleasure on the beauties of the park and grounds by which she had arrived at her destination, and above all she recalled with feelings of real gratitude the kind reception with which her new friends had greeted her. At length she roused herself from the reverie into which she had fallen, and having hastily arranged her dress in a few minutes was ready to join Lady Beauchamp in the

drawing room. As she crossed the hall the footman whom she had first seen met her but did not turn to open the door of the drawing room for her, and she felt that this little slight was intended to remind her of her position in the family. For a moment her sensitive nature shrunk from the implied insult and a sudden glow suffused her cheek, but in a moment she condemned the pride of heart which had induced it and mentally resolved to strive against a feeling which must have its origin in evil.

She found Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp in a room which was called the small drawing room in which when alone they usually passed their evenings. A grand piano and beautiful harp with other musical instruments gave promise to Kate of an indulgence which for some time she had been denied, and it was with real delight that she heard Lady Beauchamp say they were both passionately fond of music. "And you play, Miss Sinclair? indeed I am told you are quite a proficient."

"Oh indeed," said Kate, "I must assure you I deserve no such distinction, though I must admit that I have always been devotedly fond of music, and as my father is himself very musical he was anxious that my taste should be early cultivated and hitherto music has been our greatest pleasure, but," she added, "it is long since I touched a piano and I fear I am sadly in need of practice now."

"Well my dear Miss Sinclair," Sir Edmund good-

humouredly said, "we shall have great pleasure in giving you an opportunity of recalling your skill, and I hope we shall have a little agreeable music to cheer us in the evening."

Dinner was now announced and they proceeded to the dining-room. Here Kate was much struck with the elegant simplicity of all the arrangements, and quite charmed with the easy refined manners of her new friends. During the time the servants remained in the room the conversation was of rather a desultory character ; Lady Beauchamp however soon reminded Kate that she must not forget her good intentions and that she did not mean to excuse the promised practice ; after which she led the way to the drawing-room where they were shortly afterwards joined by Sir Edmund, who almost immediately proposed that Lady Beauchamp should play one of his favourite airs ; this she did, and Kate delighted with the brilliancy of her execution felt a shrinking fear lest her own style of playing should not prove satisfactory to her auditors, so that it was with a beating heart and trembling fingers that she took her seat at the instrument and at Lady Beauchamp's request began to play one of Mendelssohn's exquisite "songs without words," but timid as she was her love for music prevailed, and absorbed in the beauties of the composition before her she forgot all other feelings and when she ceased she was most warmly applauded by her delighted auditors. Kate's musical attainments were of no common order,

and her pure and genuine taste which enabled her to embody as it were the every feeling of the composer, produced an effect which none but a highly-cultivated ear could appreciate, though all must admire ; the extreme beauty of her hands and the grace which animated them added much to the charm of her performance, and her speaking eye and ever-varying countenance engaged the sympathy and interest of all around her ; she possessed also a most flexible and beautiful natural voice and at Lady Beauchamp's request she sang that exquisite song of Mozart's "Dove sono i bei Moment" with such eloquent pathos and tenderness that her success was complete, and Sir Edmund, who was a devoted admirer of Mozart, drew near her and expressed in the warmest terms his gratification at finding that she was not so spoiled by the modern style of music as to discard his favourite composer ; "and I am sure," said he, "the charming manner in which you have just sung is sufficient proof that Mozart is fully appreciated and admired by you."

This Kate readily admitted and said that to her father she was chiefly indebted for the development and direction of her taste in music, and that having himself a decided bias in favour of Mozart and Beethoven he had been very desirous that his children should cultivate a taste for their compositions.

"Quite right, *quite* right," Sir Edmund replied, "I rejoice to hear that you have been so judiciously directed. I am I confess no great admirer of the present school of music."



This led to an animated discussion in which Lady Beauchamp defended with some warmth the merits of "Schuloff," Mendelssohn, and even Auber, but at this name Sir Edmund rather impatiently interrupted her and said, "Depend upon it, Gertrude, with your good taste you will tire of these composers and lay them aside long before the world in general ceases to admire them, for you are too sincere a lover of good sound music to be long satisfied with any of the compositions you have named, though remember I am far denying that they possess great merit, but in my opinion the works of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven will maintain their pre-eminence in the estimation of musicians as those of Shakespeare ever must among the lovers of true poetry ;—but I must not bore Miss Sinclair with my perhaps rather antiquated ideas."

The conversation was here interrupted, for to Kate's great surprise a sweet musical chime was heard in the hall which continued for about five minutes, and Lady Beauchamp told her that this was their usual mode of summoning the household to their evening devotions, and that the old clock from whence these sounds proceeded had been in their family many years and had never been used for any other than the present purpose.

A servant now entered and holding open the door for them the party passed into the hall at the end of which was a deeply-recessed oriel window which was fitted up as a sort of oratory ; the steps leading into it were covered with crimson cloth as was also the floor

of the recess ; in the centre was placed a desk with a fald-stool before it and with an open book upon it, at each side of which was a silver branch with candles. Kneeling-stools occupied the sides of the room, and by day the whole was concealed by the heavy folds of a crimson curtain. The domestics were all assembled, for it was an established rule that none should absent themselves without permission ; and Sir Edmund himself conducted the prayers of his household with much fervent piety and devotion.

In a few days Kate was regularly installed in her new office and with written rules for herself and her pupils every thing went on with the utmost regularity, but as Lady Beauchamp had requested her not to allow the children to pursue their studies too closely at first, Kate found that she had more leisure than she could have anticipated, and she was delighted to devote a large portion of it to the pleasure of soothing and comforting the little Alice who became daily and hourly more attached to her. Seated close by her couch with her little thin hand closely clasped within her own Kate would lead the little creature to open all her heart in conversation, answering her in the most simple language and ever seeking to teach her the gentle lesson of patience and confiding trust in her heavenly Father. At times poor little Alice was sadly irritable and Kate occasionally found both herself and the nurse in tears, and then the child would

say in her sweet touching voice, "Oh Kate you will not love me, nobody will love me, for I am so very very naughty ; but pray tell poor nurse that I am sorry now, for do you know Kate I tried to strike her just now for hurting me when she placed my pillows, and yet she was not careless but very gentle with me, and now I am so vexed." And then nurse was recalled and Kate tried to induce the little girl herself to confess her fault. It was not however at all times that Alice was disposed to be so amiable, and she required much persuasion before she would admit that she was wrong ; her kind monitress would then gently but earnestly explain to her the sinfulness of pride and passion, and lead her by degrees to real penitence. After any of these scenes she would put her little arm round Kate's neck and pressing her cheek close to hers would say, "God will bless *you*, dear Kate, for you are so good ; oh I will try to learn of *you*." And Kate in gentle whispers would answer, "Not of *me*, dearest child, not of *me*, but of *Him* who was 'meek and lowly of heart,' and then my darling Alice will find *peace*." And the little suffering child was hushed and with humble contrite looks would promise to be good and gentle.

For some days after Kate's arrival at Granby the weather had been so cold and wet, with driving sleet and snow, that she and her little pupils had been entirely confined to the house. A bright frosty morning now tempted her to lay aside the books and prepare

for a long walk ; the children, delighted at the prospect of emancipation from their lessons, were in joyous spirits and immediately proposed that they should walk to Granby and show Kate the pretty village and church which she had not yet seen. All were soon equipped in their warm comfortable walking dresses, and the little girls, each taking a hand of their kind young Governess, proceeded through a shrubbery path at the back of the house, which winding round the hill soon led them to a point where the village, with its pretty church, could be seen in the valley before them at the distance of about a mile, surrounded by well watered meadows and thickly wooded hedge-rows; but as Henrietta observed, this was "the worst season of the year for seeing the country, though when Spring comes I am sure you will be delighted with this spot, and I hope we shall often come here. And do you know," she added, " we often used to bring poor Alice here and make pretty garlands and wreaths of wild flowers to amuse her." Some few moments they lingered, but finding it very cold, they soon ran down the slope which led to the village path, and pursued their way across some fields through which a small but rapid stream found its way over shallow pebbly beds, making sweet music in its onward course, and now overhung with shrubs and alders, from whose lower branches pendant icicles were glittering in the sunshine; the ground was hard and the little herbage which remained was white with hoarfrost and crisply

crumpled beneath the feet of the children, who with rosy laughing faces were amusing themselves by running races in advance of Kate, who felt half disposed to join in their diversion; every tree was feathered with sparkling gems of hoarfrost, which reflected back a thousand brilliant colours in the sunlight, and now they arrived at the last stile on each side of which the villagers had formed a sort of seat overshadowed in summer by hawthorn and other shrubs which formed a natural arch above it, and from hence could be seen the village green with its pretty schoolhouse, and a little in the distance the church with its picturesque grey tower covered with ivy. As they approach this spot the clock strikes twelve, and while for a moment they pause to listen to its sound the door of the schoolhouse opens and forth rush the village children, who with boisterous glee disperse themselves in picturesque groups and complete the beauties of the simple scene.

"Now, dear Miss Sinclair, you must come and see Mr. Elliott's house, it is so very pretty and in such a lovely situation, and he is such a dear good man that we all love him dearly."

Kate, who wished to see as much as possible of this sweet place, readily complied with their request and followed her little guides across the green and through a narrow lane, at the end of which they came to a low green paling well backed by evergreens, which completely formed a screen to the garden into which through a little ornamental gate they now turned;

following a circuitous path through a small shrubbery they came to an ivy covered building with gable roofs and dormer windows, evidently of no modern construction. A smooth well kept lawn with rustic baskets for flowers placed here and there and skirted by the shrubbery through which they had just passed occupied the space in front of this nice old vicarage while in the back ground some fine old elms lent a shade and shelter from the summer heat ; but Kate, who had no idea that the children would lead her within view of the windows, now insisted on immediately retracing their steps, though Henrietta assured her that they always came to see Dr. Elliott and that he would be quite vexed if they did not go in. At this moment the old gentleman himself made his appearance from a walk close by them and holding out a hand to each of the children, said—

“ Ah, my dear little friends ! I must decide this question : you are quite right in thinking that I shall be vexed if you run away without paying your usual visit.” Then turning to Kate, he took off his hat and said, “ Pray indulge me by allowing my little favourites to stay with me a few moments. I am sure you must all need rest after your long walk.”

Having gained a timid consent from Kate, he led the way into the house ; passing through a small vestibule they turned into a study, the arrangements of which quite delighted Kate ; the walls were fitted up with well filled book shelves ; a large easy chair was

placed near the fire and by its side stood a desk table with a large Bible open upon it; a long table covered with books and papers occupied the whole centre of the room, showing that this was the old gentleman's usual sitting room; the windows which had deep old fashioned seats were of stained glass in the upper compartments, and as Kate took her seat near one of them she saw that it commanded a view of the pretty tower of the village church. The owner of this comfortable dwelling much interested Kate, who was struck by his dignified appearance and manner: he was indeed a fine venerable looking person; tall though somewhat bent by years, with hair of silver white and a countenance full of benevolence and kindly feeling, Dr. Elliott never failed to command the respect of all who knew him; he now seated himself in his large easy chair and taking little Gertrude on his knee he pretended to scold her for not having been polite to her friend, saying, " You must introduce me, Gertrude, you know Mamma expects you to do the honours in her absence :" but Gertrude said, " I don't know what you mean, Dr. Elliott : " What is introduce ? and what are honours ?"—" Ah, little one ! Well you have quite posed me now ; well, well, I suppose I must ask this lady to indulge an old man's curiosity and tell me who it is that has done me the kindness of bringing my little visitors to see me to-day ? "

Kate blushed, but said " My name is Sinclair, and I am governess to these dear children."

Won by her sweet voice and simple manner, Dr. Elliott rose, and holding out his hand said, "I hope then we shall soon be good friends, for I must beg, my dear young lady, that you will as frequently as possible allow me an opportunity of seeing your little pupils, and you must remember that a visit to a solitary old man is an act of charity. But now let me ask, have you seen my church, and what part of the village have you visited?"

"Oh Dr. Elliott," said Henrietta, "we only just brought her across the green, and she has never seen the church or the dear old poor house; so now do come with us as usual, and take us to see blind William and good old Susan Miles, come!"

The children each seized a hand of their kind old friend, who said, "Well, well, my dears, if Miss Sinclair will accept my escort, nothing would please me so much as to accompany you in your morning ramble."

Henrietta flew to fetch his hat and Gertrude to find his stick, and with a kind smile he said, "Well, you are impatient I see, so I must not ask for a longer visit."

Pleasantly did they all chat and laugh as they pursued their path towards the church, which was their first object of interest; but though very clean and kept in the nicest order, Kate could not but lament that such a really beautiful edifice should be so disfigured by high pews and heavy galleries; and she

perhaps a little disappointed her kind conductor, who could not see any the slightest defect, so long had he been accustomed to consider *his* church quite perfection. But Kate was no flatterer, and though she warmly commended the picturesque beauty of the building, she was too sincere to assume a satisfaction which she could not feel, and she was quite relieved when the children impatiently reminded her that they must proceed quickly, as otherwise they should not have time to visit the almshouse.

Crossing the lower side of the green, they now approached an old fashioned heavy gate, which admitted them to a small courtyard, one side of which was occupied by a long row of old houses of the date of Edward the Sixth, and having the windows and pointed roofs of that period; one of these houses was appropriated to each tenant of the almshouse, and the whole was kept in the most excellent order by Sir Edmund Beauchamp, who was the Lord of the Manor.

Standing at the door of one of these houses was an old man, erect in form and with a sweet calm countenance, his bright blue eyes appeared to beam upon the approaching visitors, and in no way could it have been discovered that their "sense was shut;" his dress was a long dark blue gown, which hung in ample folds from his neck, round which a spotless white kerchief was carefully adjusted; his shoes were high on the instep, and had large silver buckles as fasteners, and he

supported himself by leaning on a large stick ; standing with his white hairs uncovered, he turned on the party a smile of welcome.

“ Well, William,” said Dr. Elliott, “ I suppose you know who are my companions to-day ? ”

“ Why yes Sir, I believe I hear my two kind little ladies ; but I think I heard a stranger’s step besides when you were coming athwart the courtyard.”

“ Yes, William, you are quite right,” said little Gertrude ; “ but she will not be a stranger long, she is such a dear kind lady.”

“ I shall be proud to hear her, Miss ; but my blindness is a sad privation, for I quite long to see ye all.”

“ Ah, William,” said Dr. Elliott, “ the loss of sight must indeed be a sad trial, but you have the blessing of an enlightened heart, and I know and am sure, that by the aid of God’s Holy Spirit you have been permitted to find a consolation which many are denied, and can with sincere faith confess, that the Lord hath for you done all things well.”

“ Yes Sir, I thank the Lord, and your good teaching, I am more happy and peaceful like than most folks ; and I feel that if my eyes are dark why they are kept from beholding vanity, and doubtless all things work together for good to them that loves the Lord, and I humbly hope, Sir, I may say that my greatest joy and comfort is found in his service. But can’t you please to walk in, Sir ? ”

“ Not to-day, William, not to-day, for I am taking

this young lady to see my village, and I fear we have not much time to spare."

"And make so bold, Sir," said William, "who may the young lady be as my dear little Miss Gertrude praised so well just now?"

"My name is Sinclair," said Kate; "and I hope, my good friend, you will soon recognize my step when I come with my dear little pupils to visit you."

"Thankee, Miss, I am sure if I may trust my hearing I shall not forget your sweet voice, and I knows your step already."

The clock now striking one, reminded Kate that in half an hour they would be expected at home, and reluctantly she felt obliged to say adieu to old William, and telling Dr. Elliott that they must defer till another time their visit to old Susan, they shook hands with much warmth and cordiality and parted, Kate feeling that in him she had secured a kind and valuable friend.



CHAPTER XVI.

TIME glided by on the downy wings of peace and tranquillity, filling Kate's heart with joy and thankfulness. She had now passed several months at Granby Hall, and in the fulfilment of every appointed duty she found each day increase her happiness : loving and beloved by all around her, as yet no cloud had arisen to disturb the sunshine of her heart; her letters from home were of the most satisfactory character, except that they expressed regret that no situation could be obtained for Charles. Her father had found an excellent purchaser for some of his best water colour drawings, and was much cheered by the hope that he should by the aid of his pencil be enabled to assist in providing for the comfort of his family. Her mother's health was fast improving, and the dear little ones were well and happy. From Miss Hartop too Kate received most satisfactory letters ; she had left the situation which had been so far from comfortable, and was residing with a Mrs. Marston, a widow lady, who had engaged the services of Miss Hartop in educating her two little

girls ; and here the kind Miss Hartop had found a very pleasant quiet home. This information gave Kate sincere pleasure, as she had felt some fear that her kind and generous friend had for her sake relinquished an engagement with Lady Beauchamp.

One evening when Kate was occupied in writing answers to these letters, she received a pencilled note from Lady Beauchamp, requesting to see her in the drawing-room ; on obeying the summons, she found her and Sir Edmund standing in close conversation near one of the windows ; it was evident they were discussing some subject in which she was interested, for on her entrance a kindly smile from both was directed towards her, and Lady Beauchamp immediately advanced to meet her ; then pressing one of Kate's hands in both her own, she said, " I must be the first to congratulate you, dear Miss Sinclair, although I must leave Sir Edmund to explain the cause of my doing so." And then Sir Edmund, whose eye always filled with the ready tear of sympathy, said, " I am glad indeed to tell you, my dear young lady, that I have fortunately succeeded in gaining for your brother the promise of a very excellent appointment, which will I trust prove highly advantageous, and I hope agreeable to him ; and I am sure you will wish to be the first to communicate to him this welcome intelligence." Sir Edmund paused, but perceiving that surprise and pleasure prevented Kate's immediate reply, he went on to say, that in consequence of his having

heard that her brother was anxiously seeking for some situation, he had made enquiries of their mutual friend Miss Hartop, and had heard from her such an excellent account of Charles, that he had been induced to write to his old friend Sir Archibald Munroe, requesting him to exert his influence in her brother's favour. "Some few weeks have elapsed since then," he continued, "and I am sure my dear Miss Sinclair will believe that the answer which I have just received has really afforded me most sincere pleasure."

Kate's quivering lip and tearful eye spoke volumes of the gratitude which filled her heart, yet could she find no words in which to express her thanks, and all unused to guile or ceremony she clasped the hands of both her kind friends and looking into Sir Edmund's face with childlike simplicity she uttered a fervent "God bless you." The gentle pressure of her soft hands was returned with even affectionate kindness, and her tears were understood and received as more than sufficient acknowledgment of the kind act which had excited them, but in a moment Sir Edmund said in a cheerful tone, "Well then we will consider that as a settled affair, for I conclude I may accept Sir Archibald's kind offer for your brother. What say you, can you venture to decide for him in his absence?"

"Oh yes, yes Sir Edmund, he will be only too thankful I am sure. And if you approve it I should

like to write to him directly and tell him of your kindness and his own good fortune."

"Do so, then, and tell him from me that I should advise him to see Sir Archibald as soon as possible and offer his thanks to him in person, and if you will prepare your letter I will give you a note of introduction to enclose. Now then for an hour of writing and then, remember, I shall expect to hear a little of my favourite Mozart." As the door closed upon Kate's receding footsteps Sir Edmund said, "What a charming naïve creature that is; I think I never met with a more gentle and attractive person in my life, yet withal it is a firm and noble character, and she is superior to most of her sex I think."

"Gently, *gently*, my good sir! remember ladies do not bear a rival near the throne;—but seriously speaking, I quite agree with you—she is a sweet girl and my heart warms towards her more each hour, indeed I already love her almost as I should an elder daughter."

"Or *sister*, dearest Gertrude, for she is very much what a sister of yours would be; but now let me ask you a question. I am going to write to Sir Archibald, shall I enclose a note for Henry Carleton and remind him of his promise to come and see us? he has now so particular an interest in this neighbourhood I should think he must wish to come and look about him a little; what say you, shall I ask him?"

"Oh yes, certainly," said Lady Beauchamp, "you

know he is a great favourite of mine, and by the way, if you have no objection I should like to ask Isabel and Julia at the same time, and I will write to them directly, for I am sure they will be delighted to come."

" Well then so let it be, but I must forewarn you, my dear Gertrude, all speculations in that quarter will I am sure be unavailing. I am certain Isabel went too far in her attentions to Mr. Carleton when he was last here, and I plainly perceived he entertained no particular penchant for her. However I shall leave all that to your own discretion, and now if you please we will prepare our letters."

It was to Sir Edmund a subject of some chagrin that these young ladies were to be invited to meet his young friend Carleton as they were never favourites with him, though as the children of Lady Beauchamp's sister he could not of course object to her wish of receiving them at his house; he solaced himself, however, by writing a most pressing invitation to Henry Carleton, to whom he was much attached, and who had in consequence of his friendship for Sir Edmund recently purchased the advowson of the Living of Granby.

Soon after these letters were completed Kate returned to enjoy the promised hour of music, and never did she feel so desirous to please her kind and attentive auditors, though her mind was filled with the thoughts of home and all its dear associations. She

longed to know how her dear parents and Charles would be affected by the news which she had just conveyed to them, and as the thought passed through her mind she mentally exclaimed, "Oh that some kindly fairy would bring me a magic mirror in which like Elfrida of old I might witness the joy of my dear ones when they receive my welcome letter."





CHAPTER XVII.

BUT although no answering Fay brought to Kate's longing eyes the wished-for "mirror," and she must trust to memory alone for the imaged semblance of those she loves, we will take the liberty of once more transporting ourselves into the presence of the beloved ones she so longed to see, and by following the postman who is rapidly approaching their door I doubt not we shall gain admission to their family circle; not that *he* will so far intrude himself, and we must seek another guide ere we shall reach our wished-for destination. His loud knock now echoes through the street, and at the well-known sound little Maggie's "saft blue e'en" come peering forth to see gin he's brought a letter for Miss Moffat," and as the postman turns away from the door she rushes hastily into the room of her mistress and says, "'deed then here's a sight for sair een, for here's a letter for Maister Charles frae sweet Miss Kate, an I'm thinking he'll be amaist beside his sel' wi' joy; shall I call Honor? or may I tak it to him mysel'?—oh do let me!"

"Yes, yes, Maggie, rin awa' an gin ye can do it wi'out offending, bide a wee an speer how the dearest of young leddies is in her health noo, but dinna be owr that curious and dinna bide lang, hinny."

With breathless speed little Maggie mounted the long flights of stairs and soon with her young hands trembling with delight she stands before the assembled party in the studio, still the favourite sitting-room of the Sinclairs, and now presenting a beautiful picture of domestic home-like comfort. Mr. Sinclair is seated before his easel on which rests a lovely landscape nearly completed, and Maggie's stolen glance presents to her eye a group of cattle standing at eventide by the brink of a limpid stream of water which, as she thinks, "makes one thirsty only to look upon it;" beautiful trees too are there, and distant hills lighted up by the red glow of sunset, and Maggie mentally ejaculates, "'deed then them cows is muckle weel aff I'm thinking, to hae sic a nice cool shade upon siccen a het evening!" Near the easel stands little Emily watching her father's progress with no small interest as in her a taste for his delightful art has strongly developed itself. Mrs. Sinclair is occupied in listening to little Rosy, who in subdued tones is repeating a French lesson, and Charles is seated at a table writing. All are busy, and all look well and happy. A moment the child paused to look upon this tranquil scene and then she hastily turned to Charles and put into his hand the letter from his sister.

Little Maggie waited for a few moments hoping to make the enquiries which Miss Moffat had suggested, but Charles's sudden start from his seat as soon as he had read the first line excited the interest of all the party and the little girl was hastily dismissed, when shutting the door he announced to his parents with breathless delight the contents of Kate's letter. "And now, dear kind father, I shall no longer remain to burthen you with my maintenance, but shall, I trust, be able to assist in removing some of *your* difficulties and privations. Oh I am so happy, so truly thankful!"

With a voice somewhat inarticulate from emotion his father warmly congratulated him, but his mother's tears alone spoke her tender sympathy in his happiness; other thoughts, too, crowd upon her heart as she feels that one by one the children she has so idolized are removed from the home of their parents.

After the first feelings had somewhat subsided Mr. Sinclair advised Charles to seek Sir Archibald Munroe as soon as possible, as it would be right to lose no time in availing himself of Sir Edmund's kind note of introduction, and Charles went immediately to prepare for his visit. While he was thus engaged his father and mother conversed with much interest on the subject of his bright prospects, and dwelt also with real pleasure on the comforting assurances which Kate had given them of her own happiness, acknowledging with all the pride of fond parents the advantages which

all had derived from her sweet and amiable character and conduct.

When Charles returned, to receive his father's final instructions relating to his approaching interview with his new patron, his whole appearance was such as to justify the hope that the first impression which would be conveyed might be a favourable one. Charles was a fine handsome lad of about seventeen, tall and well formed, with a sparkling blue eye that spoke of a fine generous disposition and kind heart within; gentlemanly in dress, and with a disengaged and easy though not presuming manner he was a favourite with all who knew him.

After a few parting words of advice Charles departed on his interesting errand. On the stairs he met Maggie, and in amends for his hasty dismissal of her in the morning he spares one of his precious minutes to speak a kind word to the gentle child, and comforts her little heart by telling her that her "dear Miss Kate is well," and has sent some good news, and then he makes up for his loss of time by springing down the last six steps of the long staircase; but here another hindrance arose, for he must tell good Miss Moffat the joyful intelligence which had reached him knowing, as he said, that she would "be so pleased." And no one could doubt the sincerity with which she uttered her simple assurance that "deed sir ye do me nae mair than justice; I am *varra* glad to hear ye hae sae muckle cause to be thankfu', an I truly wish ye

joy and happiness in yer new vocation whatsoever it may be." Once more Charles prepared to depart, but his cup of congratulation was not yet full : at the door he met poor Honor, who as usual had been "detained" at the greengrocer's and was yet to learn the events of the morning. On seeing Charles prepared for some unusual occasion she exclaimed, "Och thin Masther Charles, sir, what has happened since I lift ye, for I see something new has chanced, and may be ye are going to see my darlint Miss Kate, or perhaps yer going to fetch her home?"

"No, no, my good Honor, not so; but something as you say *has* 'chanced,' and we have received good news from my sister ;" and then he briefly explained to the kind-hearted girl that his own future prospects had become bright and promising."

"And thank God for that same, my dear young Masther ! long may ye live to enjoy them, and may the Hivins niver cease to shower down the best of blessings upon yer head ! May the sun of your happiness niver set, and may the saints in glory be about your bed ! — and will ye lave us entirely, Masther Charles, as my poor dear Miss Kate did ?"

"Oh no, Honor, I shall live in London and shall often come and see you all."

"Thanks be to God for that same !—but I musn't be your hindrance any longer and my lady will be waiting for me, let alone Miss Rose and Miss Emily that I promised to take out a walking wid me."

At last Charles steps forth into the street and swinging his little cane in his hand he seems to tread on air so buoyant is his heart, so exhilarated are his spirits, but it is a long distance to that part of town in which Sir Archibald resides, and he gladly avails himself of the first sound of "Cab, sir?" and finds himself whirled through the streets at dangerous speed, so that long before he has settled in his mind what had better be his form of address, and has scarcely prevailed upon himself to believe that his note of introduction is safe though he has nervously ascertained that fact by taking it ten times from the pocket of his waistcoat, and he is still in that sort of flurry of spirits which such stirring events generally produce upon young and sanguine minds when the sudden pull up of the carriage which jerks him to the end of the seat, announces that he has arrived at his destination, the driver descends from his box and running or rather waddling up the steps gives a thundering knock at the door and pulls the bell as if some mesmerist had just put his organ of destructiveness in full operation. Charles tried in vain to make him come back and open the door of the cab for him that he might retrieve this awkward mistake, for he had been expressly advised by his father to walk the latter part of his little journey and quietly to announce his arrival at the house ; however it was too late to recollect all this, for there stands the cabman quite satisfied that "all is right," and it was not till the door was opened by the

porter that he returned to release his prisoner. Charles bounded up the steps and to his enquiry "whether Sir Archibald was at home" received a more civil reply that he was than he could under the circumstances have expected. A tall and well-powdered lacquey led the way through a hall of unusual dimensions and along a suite of rooms of almost Eastern magnificence and then throwing open the last door of the suite, which opened into an elegant morning room, he announced "Mr. Charles Sinclair," but on seeing that the only occupant of the room was a young man of about seven or eight and twenty he said, "Can you tell me, Sir, where to find Sir Archibald ?" and was answered that he was gone to his dressing-room, upon which the man withdrew and silently closed the door when Charles found himself alone with the stranger, who immediately rising and laying aside the book with which he had previously been occupied walked towards Charles, and meeting his half bashful look with an answering one of kind and gentlemanly sympathy offered him a seat, and taking one himself near him entered into conversation with that air of frank good humour which belongs exclusively to a really well-bred man, and before which all Charles's mauvaise honte instantly vanished, and in a few minutes they were engaged in a really animated conversation, in the midst of which they were interrupted by the entrance of Sir Archibald himself. He was rather below the middle height and in no way remarkable for any particular feature ex-

cept a pair of piercing eyes of extraordinary brightness for a man of his age, for he was at least sixty, and his complexion showed that at some period of his life he must have been much exposed to the trying influence of a hot climate. His dress and bearing were those of a perfect gentleman, and he advanced towards Charles with a kind air which much relieved his embarrassment.

Sir Archibald said, "I conclude I am now addressing the young friend of Sir Edmund Beauchamp?" to which Charles with an assenting bow replied, "I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Edmund for an introduction to you, Sir Archibald, but I am sorry to say I am as yet personally unknown to him," and taking the treasured note from his waistcoat pocket and saying, "this I believe will explain my circumstances better than I can myself," he placed it in the hands of his patron; while he was engaged in reading its contents Charles stole an observing glance at his younger companion: on the arrival of Sir Archibald, Charles had placed himself with his back to the window, and as the young man sat immediately opposite to him on the other side of the table, which, covered with books and newspapers occupied the space between them, the light fell full upon his face, and Charles thought he had never seen a more classical or beautiful head and bust; his dark hair curled in graceful waves upon his brow, and his soft yet brilliant black eyes seemed beaming with every bright intelligence and virtue; his complexion

was rather dark but by no means sallow, and his well formed mouth was expressive of the kindest feeling, while an ever varying expression betrayed every emotion of his mind ; he sat watching the countenance of Sir Archibald and seemed much interested in trying to read his thoughts as he perused the note which Charles had brought, and was evidently not at all aware of the impression he had made on the mind of the young visiter. As soon as Sir Archibald had finished reading he placed the note on the table by his side and resting one finger on it he turned to Charles and said, with a slightly changed manner and the quick tone in which he always spoke, " So young gentleman, your sister is Lady Beauchamp's *governess* I find, and Sir Edmund tells me that the interest which they felt in *her* induced the application to me for your appointment to some lucrative and honourable situation, but that you are at present a stranger to him."

Poor Charles ! his alarm was very great, but he summoned courage and tried to speak with becoming modesty, yet with firmness, while he said, " This is quite true, Sir Archibald, and it was not till two hours ago I learnt that Sir Edmund had so kindly, so benevolently interested himself for me ; I am indeed truly grateful to him, not only for the kindness which he has shown *me*, but for his consideration for my dear sister."

" Very well, very well, I like that, young Sir, and I doubt not I shall find reason to be quite satisfied with all that he has done, but before I give you your cre-

dentials for entering on your new office, I am desirous to know a little more of my protégé ; will you then, if not unpleasant to you, tell me something of your present circumstances, for it appears that *your* sister must be somewhat out of her proper sphere. Don't go Carleton," he said, as he saw the young man rise with the apparent intention of leaving the room, "Don't go away, unless Mr. Charles wishes to be alone with me."

"O no, not at all, I beg you will not move; my story, at least so much of it as relates to myself and my sister, is no secret; my father is an officer and my mother was of a good family in Ireland, and we have until the last six months been living in affluence: pecuniary losses have changed our circumstances, and my dear good sister has considered it a duty to seek some means of assisting her family, and in Lady Beauchamp she has found a most kind and considerate patroness; she is as you say, Sir Archibald, the Governess to Sir Edmund's children, *at present*," he murmured in a low tone, which was not lost upon either of his hearers.

"I thank you Sir," said Sir Archibald, "for your candour and openness, and I feel much interested in your account, which you have given in a manly, straightforward manner, and I shall no longer keep you in any anxiety as to my intentions, but shall with great pleasure give you your introduction to the office which has been promised to you through Sir Edmund."

Charles hastily rose and bowing said, "Allow me to

thank you Sir Archibald most sincerely for your kind consideration, which I can assure you has excited in me more gratitude than I can find words to express."

" Sit down, my dear Sir, sit down, you and I must become better acquainted, and I must now do, what I have been remiss in omitting, and introduce you to Mr. Carleton, who is very soon going to pay a visit to Sir Edmund Beauchamp, and as I have a paper to prepare for you, I will leave you with him till I return."

So saying Sir Archibald left the room, and Mr. Carleton and Charles resumed a nearer position to each other and again entered into conversation, in the course of which Charles learnt that his new acquaintance had just returned from the Continent, where he had been travelling for the last year, and also that he intended going to Granby Hall in a few days, and he kindly said, "and pray remember that I shall have great pleasure in taking anything for your sister that you may like to entrust to my care." Charles with some hesitation admitted that he wished much to send a little book which Kate had greatly valued, and it was agreed that it should be sent to Mr. Carleton on the following day. In a few more moments Sir Archibald returned and giving Charles his letter of appointment and another paper containing some instructions, he received his parting bow, and Mr. Carleton kindly following him to the door of the room, shook hands with him and telling him not to forget to send "the little book," they parted, and Charles with a light heart

turned his steps towards home, thankful that he carried with him the conviction that he had not left an unfavourable impression on the mind of his patron, and feeling all the warmth of a young and ardent boy, excited in his heart towards the charming young man who had been so very kind in his manner to him. As soon as he reached home he related all that had occurred to his father and mother, who both listened to his account with the deepest interest and pleasure, and after a great deal of discussion of various plans it was settled that a small lodging for Charles should immediately be secured in the vicinity of the office in which his attendance would be required. In the few days which intervened before Charles entered on his new duties he endeavoured to assist his father in making arrangements for the sale of some more of his drawings; the first two that had been so advantageously sold had been sent to Mr. Dalton, and he had very soon found a good purchaser in the eccentric Mr. Crosby, but as he had particularly requested that his name might not transpire in the affair, it was still unknown to Mr. Sinclair, and it was now proposed that Mr. Dalton should be asked whether he thought he could dispose of any more; for this purpose Charles himself proceeded to Mr. Dalton's shop, and finding him alone he asked him if he could receive and take charge of the drawings in question, when to his great surprise he was told that as many as Mr. Sinclair could find leisure to complete would be gladly purchased by

the gentleman who had taken the first pair. While Charles was in the shop his sister's little dog came to recognize and caress him and while he was fondling it he saw approaching from the opposite side of the street the elderly gentleman who had travelled with him in the omnibus the evening he came from the Hunters, and in another moment Mr. Crosby entered the shop ; on seeing Charles he was evidently inclined to make good his retreat, but as he could not find an excuse for such a change of purpose he advanced towards him and said, " Are you come to reclaim that little dog, hey ? I hope not, foolish things those Italian greyhounds, *very* foolish things."

Charles could scarcely repress a smile, but said in his usual straightforward manner, " No Sir, I am not come to fetch poor Fido, I wish I was."

" *Wish* you were, why? what can you want of such a useless little animal, no good to anybody, what would you do with it if you had it, eh ? "

" O I should like to keep it for my sister's sake if I could ? "

" Your *sister's* sake ! what has happened to your sister, where is she ? "

Mr. Crosby's tone was now so changed that no one could have believed it proceeded from the same person as he who in gruff accents had first accosted Charles, and it was evident that he believed some sad event had occurred since he had last heard of Miss Sinclair, but Charles soon told him of his sister's absence and its

cause, and then seeing that his attention was kindly awakened he informed him with all the ingenuous warmth of his character that he was just going himself "into the Secretary of State's office," upon which piece of good fortune Mr. Crosby contrived to congratulate him with some show of civility, but he hastily departed leaving Charles wondering and amazed at his strange manner, for he scowled as he went away as if ashamed of having been betrayed into an ordinary politeness. When he was gone Mr. Dalton said, "That's a strange character, Sir, he is always trying to induce the belief that he is a hard morose man, while in reality his heart is overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and he does more benevolent acts than any one I ever met with."

Charles said that he did appear a "strange compound" and that little as he had seen of him he had discerned that his cross manner was evidently foreign to his nature. Charles staid a few moments to play with Fido and said, "Oh, my poor little fellow, you have found a nice comfortable home, but I hope some day you will follow your dear pretty young mistress again," upon which Mr. Dalton said that he "hoped Miss Sinclair was well and that he should indeed soon have the pleasure of restoring little Fido to his owner, but that they should all be sorry to part from him."

On his way home Charles met the Hunters' gay carriage; Mrs. Hunter and Flora were in it and

Spencer was on the box with the coachman, but he did not appear to recognize Charles, and all the party seemed equally disposed to forget him except Flora who nodded kindly as she passed and looked very bright and very pretty. It was but a glance that he had of her and he sighed as he thought of the worldly character of her parents and felt that the bar of pride was placed between him and his former favourite play-fellow, as in his mind he still designated Flora.





CHAPTER XVIII.

HE day after Lady Beauchamp had despatched her letter to the Miss Waldegraves when Kate went to take her place by the couch of little Alice and to release her poor nurse for a short time from her close and unceasing attendance upon her she found the little girl so much better and stronger than usual that she called her sisters to come and assist in amusing her, and allowed them to converse more freely than they generally did. This was to Alice a great pleasure and she became quite animated and happy till after some time Henrietta said, "Ally, we are going to have some visitors, guess who they are."

"No, Etta, you know I hate guessing," said Alice, "so now tell me at once; come now I declare it's very teasing of you."

"Well," Etta said, "you need not be so pettish, dear Alice, and now I do not think I will tell you at all."

Kate turned on Henrietta a reproachful glance which instantly recalled the little girl to a sense of the un-

kind tone in which she had spoken to her little feeble sister, and stooping down she kissed her little wan cheek and whispered that she hoped she had not teased her.

"O no, dear, not at all, but now do tell me who are the visitors of whom you spoke?"

"Well then, Ally, what think you of our cousins Isabel and Julia having been invited again, but I am not sure they will really come."

"Oh Etta," said Alice, and she began to cry, "I am so very much disappointed, I really did hope some nice little girls were coming, and now I hear only that those two proud disagreeable cousins are to come, and nurse will be so vexed for she says they treat her so very unkindly when they are here and so differently from the way in which dear Mamma and Kate do, that she dislikes them very much indeed."

"Well but, Ally dear," said little Gertrude, "perhaps they may be improved, for you know we used to be proud sometimes till Mamma and dear Miss Sinclair taught us that it was sinful."

"No! Gertrude," passionately exclaimed Alice, "they are *much* too old to be taught now even by dear Kate and I am sure I shall *hate* them."

"My dear little girl," said Kate, "you must not hate any one, and you know if we really think people act sinfully we should be sorry for them and pray that they may be forgiven."

"Well then, my own dear sweet Kate," said Alice,

"I never will hate even my cousins unless they are proud and unkind to *you*."

This little conversation excited in Kate some anxiety as to the arrival of the Miss Waldegraves, and she could not help fearing that she should not be so happy and comfortable as she had hitherto been, and when Lady Beauchamp announced that her invitation had been accepted and that she expected them the next day Kate thought that she would for a few days seclude herself as much as possible in her own apartments. Mr. Carleton's answer to Sir Edmund had not yet arrived, and the subject of his expected visit not having been mentioned no one in the house knew that he had been invited.

The following day Kate and the two little girls were standing in the hall prepared for their daily walk when the sudden sound of a carriage followed by a ring of the bell announced the arrival of visitors. In a moment the door was opened and two fashionably-dressed girls followed by a smart lady's maid carrying cloaks and shawls entered the hall.

"Oh dear Miss Sinclair," Henrietta said, "here are our cousins, I did not think they could have been here so soon;" and both the children went forward to meet them.

"Well my dear little girls," Isabel began, "how are you and how is my aunt? dear me, how wonderfully you are grown! I declare, Henrietta, you will soon be as tall as Julia;" and stooping down she

kissed them both. "Well and where is my aunt? —O in the library, is she? come then, let us go and find her;" then raising her glass and speaking in an under tone she said, "Who's that, Etta? any one I know? I am so shockingly blind I do not know any one."

"No, no, Isabel, I am sure you do not know her, so come;" but seeing that the child earnestly wished to divert their attention the sisters chose to look round the hall, each requiring the aid of an eyeglass and contriving to include Kate in the general survey in a manner which evidently called the colour to her cheek, and then drawing themselves up and folding their shawls gracefully round their really fine figures they proceeded towards the door of the library followed by Henrietta who was old enough to understand and blush for their haughty bearing and impertinent manner.

From Lady Beauchamp they received a cordial and kind greeting for she had always been much attached to these girls for her sister's sake, and though she saw and pitied their numerous faults she thought time would improve them, and she felt a kind desire to place in their way any advantage which she had it in her power to bestow. In her heart she really hoped that their rich young friend Mr. Carleton might take a fancy to Isabel, who was a fine showy girl of about nineteen. Julia was still very young and had only just left school, but from her sister she had already learnt

and adopted a supercilious manner which induced their dependants to give them the soubriquet of "the haughty sisters."

Lady Beauchamp had risen from her seat near her writing-table when her nieces and Henrietta came in, and she now walked towards the window followed by the girls. Here they all stood talking a few moments on the fineness of the day and other general topics, but Isabel's curiosity had been much excited by Kate's sweet countenance and appearance and she longed to know whether she was a visiter in the house, so turning suddenly to her little cousin she said, " Eh bien ma petite Henriette, and who is your new friend that I saw with you in the Hall ? "

" Oh," said Lady Beauchamp, " I conclude it was Miss Sinclair, was it not, Henrietta ? "

" Yes, Mamma, and I fear she is waiting for me as we are just going to take a walk, so if you please I will go now and join her. Good bye ; "—and nodding to her cousins she withdrew.

" Is that your new governess, Auntie ? " said Julia.

" Yes my dear," said Lady Beauchamp, " and a delightful person she is, I assure you."

" Ah—yes—I dare say," drawled Isabel, " a nice-looking young person; I thought—indeed I almost took her for a young lady, did not you, Julia ? "

" Why yes, I think I did—at first—but every body dresses so much above their station that really it is

difficult to decide who are people of consequence in these days."

With complacent looks she readjusted her shawl, giving it as fashionable an air as she could;—her aunt smiled at her folly and was half inclined to defend her favourite, but she thought she might perhaps induce a feeling of prejudice in the minds of her nieces if she appeared too much interested in Kate, she therefore let it pass, and in another moment Isabel said, "Well but dearest Aunt you have not told us what was the great secret at which you hinted in your letter and I assure you it excited my curiosity so greatly that I made Neville stay up all night to prepare our dresses and things that we might come by the express train this morning, so now pray tell us *who* is coming for I am sure it must be some delightful person."

"No, no," said Lady Beauchamp, "I shall not tell you one word more at present, indeed I fear you will be disappointed for I know at all events we shall see no one to-day."

"Oh now do not tantalize us, dear Auntie, pray tell us for I am dying with curiosity."

"Well I fear you will think me very cruel," said Lady Beauchamp, "but I shall only say you must wait a little while ere I shall disclose my grand secret as you call it; but come, you will like to go to your rooms and rest a little;"—and she led the way to the sleeping apartments.

Kate's first meeting with the Miss Waldegraves had

not tended to remove the impression which from the children's report of them she had been induced to form, and during her short walk she determined to withdraw herself as much as possible from collision with these young ladies, but on her return she found a little note on her dressing-table from Lady Beauchamp in which she said, "My dear Miss Sinclair, you will I hope join us as usual in the drawing-room this evening as although you have declined doing so when we have a party of friends I am really desirous that you should meet my nieces.—Ever yours, G. L. Beauchamp."

The note was twisted and curled into a variety of shapes while Kate stood looking out upon the lawn from her window. No, thought she, I will not, I cannot expose myself to the supercilious surveillance of these visitors; and she recalled with a painful feeling the glances which she had met in the morning, from which she had shrunk with a sense of humiliation—but am I right to foster these feelings which must proceed from that pride which is, alas! my besetting sin? and then Lady Beauchamp and kind Sir Edmund, will they permit me to be treated with hauteur in their presence? oh no I am sure they will not.

In this way Kate mused till the declining sun warned her that time was passing and that she must come to a decision. This was the first ordeal her pride had undergone, for as Lady Beauchamp had said, she had ever declined appearing when any strangers were pre-

sent, and she had been treated with such kind consideration by Sir Edmund and his Lady that no one had ever ventured to show any mark of disrespect. At length the little struggle ended, and she decided that as Lady Beauchamp had so kindly proposed it she would no longer hesitate but do her best to restrain any feeling of vexation which might be aroused by the conduct of the Miss Waldegraves.

At the hour when she usually made her appearance in the drawing-room she joined the party assembled there. Her dress on this evening was a very simple white muslin closed at the throat with pale blue ribbons and confined at the waist by a sash of the same colour, but the clear transparent folds only partially concealed the dazzlingly white neck and throat which they covered ; ornaments she had none, except a very small Maltese chain of gold and bracelets to correspond ; her hands, which were most delicately formed, were uncovered, and her hair was simply and beautifully arranged, and as she glided into the room nothing could exceed the ladylike and aristocratic elegance of her appearance.

Sir Edmund was standing with a music-book in his hand as if engaged in finding some song for one of his nieces, who both stood near him, and Lady Beauchamp was seated at the harp. As Kate approached the group Sir Edmund said, "Oh, Miss Sinclair, I am so glad you are come ;—Isabel, Julia, allow me to introduce you to Miss Sinclair."

Both young ladies drew themselves to their full height and bestowed as Kate thought a slighting curtsey with a sort of half-muttered word or two, but of what import did not appear, and having so far compromised their dignity they set their flounced dresses in full swing and turned their backs upon poor Kate,—this however might be only intended to display to her wondering gaze the extent of the beautiful shoulders which their fashionable dresses developed,—and then with the aid of their glasses they pretended to be looking over some prints which were placed upon the table. Despite all Kate's good resolutions this manner, so new to her, so different from anything which had ever before been shown towards her, completely unnerved her, and she felt so constrained, so awkwardly bashful, that she scarcely knew what course to pursue, and to increase her confusion the Miss Waldegraves with well-assumed liveliness and affectionate interest approached their "dear Aunt" and standing in front of her harp talked in a most animated manner to her upon subjects which entirely excluded Kate from even a chance of joining in the conversation. Sir Edmund saw and pitied his young favourite's unpleasant reception, and by talking kindly to her sought to obviate its painful effects, but Kate felt that she was *de trop*, and experienced all the shrinking timidity which such conduct always brings upon a young and sensitive mind. Music was now proposed and the Miss Waldegraves monopolized the instrument which seemed to quail

under the infliction, and Sir Edmund winced at the thundering blows which it received, while Lady Beauchamp applauded and told Isabel that she had acquired a very effective style since she last heard her play, "but," she added, "I shall not let *you* be idle this evening, Miss Sinclair, come pray find some of our favourite airs and I will accompany you."

Kate blushed, and felt angry with herself for blushing, but she resolved to try to play as usual and took her seat, but as it was "only the governess" the Miss Waldegraves seated themselves at the table and busied themselves with a novel, consequently a thick sea fog seemed to envelope poor Kate—she felt that she could not play to such unwilling hearers and never had she appeared to so much disadvantage; apparently however this was of small importance as Isabel and her sister affected to be engrossed in their amusing book and took no sort of notice of any one; all this evidently occasioned great annoyance to Sir Edmund, who kindly tried to reassure Kate and to encourage her in her performance, but she felt that it was weak and ineffective and she very soon left the instrument and tried to occupy herself with her embroidery. The chimes in the hall soon after gave notice that this painful evening was at an end and after prayers the young ladies gave Kate a parting bow which spoke as clearly as words could have expressed it, "We do not intend to become at all intimate with a governess."

Poor Kate, I fear I must confess, poor Kate felt all

this more, ay much more, than she would have done a real misfortune : stung to the quick by the pride and arrogance of girls who but for untoward events would have been in all respects her inferiors, she felt indignant at having so tamely submitted to their impertinence, but after a close examination of her own heart and feelings she wept tears of self-reproach and blamed in herself the pride which had thus barbed the arrow from which she might otherwise have escaped unscathed. " Yes it *is* pride," she said, " and I must set myself earnestly to subdue its power ; " and she sought in prayer the assistance she required for the conflict.

Meanwhile Isabel and Julia had been holding a long conference in the next room unchecked by the presence of their lady's maid Neville who pretended to be very busy in arranging their drawers. " Well Julia, what do *you* think of this smart governess ? I for my part am quite astonished at the sort of footing she has gained in this house, and I am quite determined that *I* will not so lose a sense of my own position in society as to become a companion of a governess."

" Well done, Isabel," said Julia, " I commend your spirit and *amour propre* and I shall certainly follow your example : for my part I always detest governesses, they always seem to expect you to respect their feelings as they call them ; I wonder what such people have to do with feelings, and if they have any

why they are well paid to get rid of them as fast as they can : in short I think they ought to keep entirely to the children's apartments and not intrude themselves into the society of ladies."

" And how ridiculous," said Isabel, " my uncle and aunt are to talk of her musical talents ; I would not trust her to teach my kitten to mew ; if she did I fear poor pussy would find it difficult to make herself heard."

" I wonder," said Julia, " whether she goes down to dine when they have visitors ; do you know, Neville ? "

" Oh no, Miss, I hear she has never been down to company till this evening."

" What a shame ! " exclaimed both the girls at once, " what an abominable thing ! so we are the favoured ones."

" I'm sure," said Isabel, " we are greatly indebted to my uncle for the honour of the introduction, but I shall soon show him that Isabel Waldegrave is not to be trifled with ; " and the young beauty drew herself up and with stately majesty surveyed herself in the glass in which her really elegant figure was reflected.

" I am sure, Miss," said Neville, " you have no reason to fear any comparisons being made between either you or Miss Julia with this low-born girl."

" No ! is she low-born ? well I am a little surprised at that ; but how did you hear it, Neville ? "

" O Miss Isabel, governesses and such people must, you know, be very inferior, and Bennet tells me that

she can dress herself without much assistance, and law bless me, Miss, that's proof enough for me that she's never been no great things ; I don't want to know another hindividgal circumstance of her bringing up."

" Well, Neville, you are a clever creature to be sure, it is as you say quite convincing, for I never met with any one in real high life who could do a single thing of the sort ;—Julia ! what can you be doing ? I declare unfastening your own sash ! When shall I teach you the propriety of giving yourself up, as Miss De Saintrille would say, to the hands of your attendant ? "

Julia looked quite shocked and retired to her own apartment a little ashamed and very indignant at her sister's remonstrance.





CHAPTER XIX.

APRIIL with its evanescent smiles and tearful showers has passed away and ushered in the queen of all the spring, "May," with its sunny days and pearl-like flowers bespangling every hawthorn, as though the showers of April had left their tears congealed upon each leafy spray. The day after Kate's introduction to the Miss Waldegraves the weather became so hot and almost summer-like that she resolved to delay her walk with the children till later in the day than their usual hour for recreation.

There was at no great distance from the house a sort of hollow, or dell, surrounded by oaks and other trees, the gnarled roots of which in places formed a sort of roofed shelter to the bank beneath, which, covered with moss and wild flowers, formed a delightful shaded resting-place, and to this spot Sir Edmund had caused a gradually sloping path to be constructed in order that the couch-like carriage of the little Alice might convey her there without fatigue: the mossy carpet of this lovely dell was now thickly strewn with

the pale blue flowers of the wild hyacinth and the white star-like blossoms of the wood anemone peeped forth from every grassy tuft. It was to this place that Kate had just brought the children, and in a few moments the little invalid arrived escorted by nurse, and with John drawing her little carriage. As she approached her eyes sparkled with delight, evincing her happiness in being able once more to visit her own favourite spot, and here for some time the little party amuse themselves with gathering flowers and twining them into garlands and wreaths with which to ornament the little carriage and form a crown to place on the fair curling hair of the little Gertrude whom Alice calls her sweet "Queen of the May," and Kate sits on the mossy bank under the trees with a book in her hand, though she is evidently much disturbed by the frequent demands which the children make on her attention. "Dear Kate," Alice says, "do come, I am sure you will hang my garlands quite beautifully." "Can you find a little bit of string?" Henrietta asks, and Kate from her basket produces the desired treasure and then again she tries to pursue the beautiful story which engrosses her thoughts and attention. A long time they sit enjoying this first of summer days, and now all are silent, the wreaths are finished and Gertrude is looking quite lovely as on a mossy bank they place her and Kate hails her as the "Fairy Queen Titania." At this moment a rustling above their heads alarms them, and presently a beautiful

spaniel comes bounding down the bank, and he is almost instantly followed by a young and handsome man who exclaims, "O my little darlings I thought I should find you here!" and Gertrude, all unmindful of her queenlike dignity, jumps into his arms and says, "O it's my own dear dear Carly! where have you been so long from your little wife?"

After a few moments of delight and happiness the children recollect that they had not mentioned to Miss Sinclair the name of their newly-arrived favourite, and on looking round they perceived that she had quietly withdrawn to the other side of the little dell; so seizing Mr. Carleton's hand they said, "O do come and see our dear new governess," and with gentle violence they lead him towards her.

It was an awkward moment for Kate, but Mr. Carleton advanced and raising his hat said, "I fear, Miss Sinclair, I must apologize for intruding myself in this way upon your notice, but I was quite longing to see all my little favourites and learning from the servants that they were here I followed them wishing much to see whether I should be remembered; but I hope I shall be considered less a stranger to you when I tell you that I had the pleasure of seeing your brother, Mr. Charles Sinclair, at Sir Archibald Munroe's the other morning, and he has entrusted a little volume of yours to my care which I hope will be found safe when my baggage arrives."

Kate smiled and thanked him with a guileless art-

lessness that quite charmed him, and they were all very soon on the best possible terms. Carleton had no silly pride to contend with, he thought Kate a lovely girl and was pleased with her open unsophisticated manner, and for some time he remained talking with her and caressing the children, who were all greatly charmed at the surprise his unexpected appearance had occasioned. Presently nurse arrived to take home little Alice, and the rest of the party slowly followed.

At the door they met Lady Beauchamp and the Miss Waldegraves. Isabel on seeing Mr. Carleton held out her hand with most engaging warmth and said, "Is it possible! Mr. Carleton! why we thought you were in Germany!"

Carleton explained that he had arrived at Granby about an hour before, and that after sitting a few minutes with Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp he had gone in search of his dear little friends whom he had found in "The Fairy Dell, as in days of yore we used, you know, to designate my favourite spot."

"O yes," said Isabel, "I well remember;" and she got up a very sentimental expression of countenance, which was however lost on Carleton as he had turned to look for Kate and the children, and felt much chagrined at perceiving that she had quietly withdrawn from the party and, as he felt convinced was the case, quite unnoticed by the Miss Waldegraves. Lady Beauchamp had also disappeared, and was in truth

gone into the house with Kate to soften if possible the effects of her nieces' ill-breeding towards her. Carleton had small inclination for a flirtation with Miss Isabel, and to relieve his embarrassment he said "Will you not introduce me to your sister, Miss Waldegrave?"

"O to be sure, certainly; Julia, this is my old friend Mr. Carleton of whom you have heard me speak."

The young lady curtsied and Carleton gracefully bowed, but he thought to himself, "Old friend, indeed! just the same forward girl as ever, I see, and what a contrast to that sweet quiet modest creature I saw just now. Well, well, I am not to be entrapped, Miss Isabel, and I shall take care to keep aloof from your arts as much as possible." He then entered into conversation for a few moments with the sisters, and in its progress contrived gradually to approach the door of the hall, when seeing that he must make some excuse for leaving them he said, "I believe I must find my man, for I have some parcels for Lady Beauchamp," and slightly bowing he hastily retreated into the house.

Three or four days now passed without giving rise to any incident worthy of observation. Kate occasionally met Mr. Carleton and the young ladies, but she had been so much annoyed by the hauteur of the latter that she gladly availed herself of any excuse for remaining with the children; already, too, she read in the manner of Bennet that she was less respected

and considered than she had been before the arrival of the pert lady's maid, and the children told her that Bennet had spoken of her in a very unpleasant manner to them, but that they had threatened to "tell mamma if she was so impertinent." All this was very trying to poor Kate, but she steadily pursued her prescribed course and sought in every way to drive away the feelings of wounded pride which now so frequently assailed her. It might be fancy, but she even imagined that her kind friend Lady Beauchamp was not quite the same in manner ; at all events she now saw her much less frequently, although she admitted that was her own fault in a great degree, and she determined to exert herself once more to join the musical party in the evening if she should be requested to do so. She had scarcely arrived at this conclusion when Lady Beauchamp herself came into her little room and said, "Come, my dear Miss Sinclair, I really cannot allow you to seclude yourself any longer ; I do hope you will come to us this evening and lend us a little aid in our musical arrangements. Mr. Carleton is a devoted lover of music, and I am sure you will be quite charmed with his exquisite voice and delightful taste, so now let me see you ;—no, no, I can hear of no excuses ;" and nodding goodhumouredly she left the room, giving Kate no time to express any disinclination to comply with her request. And in truth Kate had no intention to refuse, though she dreaded meeting the Miss Waldgravés, "still," as she thought, "I have resolved to

overcome my pride of heart and I ought not to omit any opportunity of doing so."

The evening passed much more agreeably than Kate had anticipated: the Miss Waldegraves certainly did not at all lay aside their condescending impertinence of manner towards her, but it had lost much of its power now that she had taught herself to consider it in its true light, and supported by the kind attention of Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp she ventured to approach the instrument with more self-possession than she had thought possible. She played with exquisite taste and feeling and in her own peculiarly graceful manner.

When she ceased playing Mr. Carleton, who had evidently listened with the greatest interest and pleasure, said, "That was indeed quite charming, but I hope you sing too, Miss Sinclair;—O I am sure you must."

"Yes," said Kate, "I sing a little;" and Lady Beauchamp, who was sitting near them, said, "O will you sing that sweet little May song which I admired so much the other evening."

Kate immediately took her seat at the instrument and sang from memory the pretty little song of "May-dew," in which the rich tones of her young melodious voice with the graceful "dew-dropping" accompaniment quite delighted her auditors, especially Mr. Carleton whose warm encomiums and bright animated looks greatly chagrined and annoyed Isabel Walde-

grave, whose envious feelings were ever excited by hearing another praised or admired; struggling however to regain her usual manner of easy self-confidence she now approached Carleton, and taking up a duet as she passed the music table said, "O Mr. Carleton, I really must ask you to let us have the pleasure of hearing your voice again, *that* will indeed be delightful; do sing this duet with me."

It was Mendelssohn's "I would that my love," and he had just decided on asking Kate to sing it with him, but he felt that it would be rude to refuse Isabel's request; and now it was Kate's turn to listen with delighted attention, for surely she had never heard so sweet a voice; it was a rich counter tenor, but there was a peculiarity in its tones which she never remembered to have met with before, and she was quite charmed not only with his voice but with the exquisite taste and feeling he developed; and then his manner too, so lively yet so tender and so very graceful that nothing could exceed its charm. On leaving the instrument Isabel cast a look of triumph at Kate and swept by her without addressing a word to her and then in a low tone to Julia muttered a few words, of which that of "governess" was alone audible, but that word reached the ear and the heart of the sensitive Kate and she could not control the blush which betrayed that it had done so. Carleton heard it too, and saw and felt for poor Kate's little vexation. Kind-hearted in the extreme and much pleased with Kate's gentle

and polished manner, he could not help feeling anxious to relieve her embarrassment and he immediately asked her to allow him the pleasure of singing with her, in so respectful and pleasing a manner that she repaid him with a look of gentle thanks; and when those two sweet voices were heard mingling their natural fine tones it was impossible for even an Isabel Waldegrave to detect aught but the most delightful harmony of sounds.

After the party dispersed that evening Sir Edmund returned to the drawing-room, when finding Lady Beauchamp there alone he said, "Really, Gertrude, the manners of Isabel and Julia quite pain and grieve me; I positively cannot consent to allow any one under my roof and protection to be treated with such hauteur and rudeness as Miss Sinclair has been by them ever since they arrived."

"I assure you," Lady Beauchamp said, "I feel quite as much displeased as you do, but I have hitherto abstained from noticing their conduct hoping that they would become aware of its impropriety, and really fearing I might do mischief instead of putting the affair on a more pleasant footing."

"Well, well, Gertrude, I am sure with your kind heart you cannot approve such conduct, and I must take some measures for putting an end to it, and as to Carleton I am sure he is quite disgusted at the exhibition of such unworthy feelings." Lady Beauchamp then promised to converse with her nieces the next day

and try to induce them to behave with more propriety, though she secretly feared it would be no easy task.

The contaminating influence of pride had gradually found its way into the hearts of many members of Sir Edmund's household, and Kate felt in the petty slights which she now received new cause each day to regret the arrival of the Miss Waldegraves ; still there was not sufficient ground to lead to a complaint of ill-behaviour in the servants. "Trifles light as air" were to her sensitive mind proof that in some way her position in the family had undergone a change. Larkins, the footman, had always shown something of the disrespect and disregard which vulgar servants too frequently exhibit towards those who are in any way occupying a situation of dependence, and now this manner was much increased, and he would pass Kate without the slightest notice, occasionally beginning to whistle long before she could be out of hearing ; and on one occasion when Lady Beauchamp told him to "tell Miss Sinclair that the carriage was at the door to take her and the children for a drive," he went to the housemaid's bell and summoned Bennet, saying in a loud tone which Kate overheard, "I say, Bennet, tell Miss Tinkler or whatever she's called that the carriage is waiting, I was not engaged by Sir Edmund to wait upon governesses."

"Well," said Bennet, "nor *me* neither, and I shall very soon leave I can tell them, for as Neville says, 'what is she to be waited upon for, I wonder?'"

At this moment Kate and the children descended the stairs and passed close by the scene of dispute, but her veil was drawn closely over her face and no one saw the heightened colour which suffused her cheek. As soon as she was gone Bennet stole a look at Larkins and said in a low voice, "Do you think she heard us?"

"Who cares?" said the man, "not *me* for one; I hope she did, and I shall tell Mrs. Neville by and bye, how nicely we have put down "the governess;" but Bennet remembered many little acts of kindness which she had received from Miss Sinclair, and she half repented having spoken so disrespectfully, but it was only *half*; and day after day some new petty impertinence befell poor Kate, and all these annoyances sprang from the evil example of the two proud ill-educated girls who encouraged their servant to speak in their presence, with impertinence and disrespect, of one who was in every way their superior, though by adverse circumstances obliged for a time to employ her talents as a means of subsistence.

About a fortnight after Carleton's arrival, he told Sir Edmund that he was going to Granby, and that he should walk to the village where he might possibly stay some little time with Dr. Elliott, and calling "Dash," he sallied forth, taking the path through the shrubbery, and across the meadows which were now in full beauty and luxuriance. The weather was unusually hot for the time of year and Carleton frequently

lifted his hat to admit air, and then would pause, to watch the progress of the rapid little stream, occasionally throwing in pieces of stick, or tufts of grass, and sending " Dash " in to fetch them out, avoiding his rough shake which sent a shower around him when he returned to lay his trophy at his master's feet. " Good dog, Dash, good dog : in again Dash, go fetch." At last tired with the heat he laid himself down upon the mossy bank, and for a long time remained watching the dipping of the swallow in the water, the May-fly skimming on its surface, and the thousand insects which the hot day had brought to revel in the sunshine ; while thus occupied, he thought he caught the sound of voices, and he presently heard Kate's in earnest conversation with some other person, and before he could apprise her of his presence, he heard her say " tell him, Jane, that I cannot come now but that I will come this evening at five o'clock ;" and as he started on his feet to speak to her he saw a young girl running hastily towards the village. " What had he to do with Miss Sinclair's arrangements ? " he thought, and " why should he feel a particular wish to know whom she had thus engaged to meet ? " surely, it could in no way interest him, but he did feel constrained and uneasy, and when he addressed her he felt that his manner was less cordial than usual ; when he first approached her she was alone, but in another moment, Henrietta and Gertrude joined her, panting with running and very warm, and Kate said " Why

did you follow me, my dears, I told you I should return to you in a few moments, and I wished you to stay on the bank where I left you." Carleton's curiosity was now quite in the ascendant still he could not ask questions, so speaking a few words of affection to the children, he bowed to Miss Sinclair and pursued his way to Granby, leaving Kate a little perplexed at his change of manner. His piercing bright eyes seemed to have looked her through, and as she sauntered back to the mound in the park where she had been sitting with the children, her mind dwelt with unaccountable interest on the words and looks of the young man, but she thought — " Why should I dwell on the subject, surely it cannot be a matter of interest to me,— still again and again the thought of those bright eyes returned to her recollection, causing her to start with a feeling of nervous anxiety.

At five o'clock that evening Kate took her lonely walk to the village, and in half an hour she was followed by Carleton who, having seen her pass through the shrubbery in her pretty small straw bonnet and neat walking dress, felt assured that she was going to fulfil the engagement which he had heard her make in the morning ; he walked rapidly through the meadows scarcely knowing why he followed her or what course he intended to pursue, yet urged on by that irresistible impulse to which young and ardent minds often yield their better judgments ; when he reached the stile which overlooked the village-green he paused, and

sitting on the lowly bench, now overshadowed by the hawthorn in full luxuriance of beauty, he tried to collect his thoughts, and he felt the warm colour mount to his eyes as he reflected "what excuse can I offer for thus indulging my curiosity by following Miss Sinclair without her knowledge? even if I succeed in finding her, which is doubtful, how foolish I have been in this matter!—well—I'll just go down to Dr. Elliott's again, and then return, I see I must give up this foolish chase;" and he once more rapidly walked, indeed almost ran forward till he reached the palings of Dr. Elliott's garden; but as he advanced more leisurely up the path to the house he thought "but this too is very awkward—I only left Dr. Elliott two hours ago—what will he think of my sudden return, without any adequate reason? well, he would trust to circumstances," and he knocked at the door and in another moment was ushered into the study; here seated at his desk, writing his sermons for the next Sunday was the good Doctor, who laid down his spectacles and holding out his hand welcomed Carleton, though he evidently expected to be told some reason for his visit, but as no subterfuge ever found its way to Carleton's lips, he only looked very shy and distract, and after sitting a few moments once more departed and took his way homewards, not however without lingering and looking about for the object of his present interest. When he was gone, Dr. Elliott sat and mused upon his sudden and strange visit; "What could have induced

it? why he scarcely spoke at all, and then he had been so long with me before to-day, what could his object have been? Now if that sweet Kate had been here I should have feared he had come after her, but that could not be for she has not been here for some days; I confess, I am quite puzzled — but this is a sad hindrance and my sermon will suffer." — So the good old man resumed his pen and for some moments no sound interrupted the silence, save the ticking of a time-piece which stood near him; in ten minutes however after Carleton's departure, the knocker again aroused Dr. Elliott from his studies, and in another moment Kate Sinclair entered the room, and was greeted by her kind old friend with words of real affection; taking her small hands in his own large and tremulous ones, he looked kindly into her sweet eyes and said "I think the air of Granby has been most beneficial to you my dear young lady for it has effectually banished the lily and implanted in its stead the loveliest of roses; there now you need not increase them, surely you would not blush at the words of an old man like me; but come, my dear child, what brings you out at this hour? some kind reason I have no doubt!"

"Thanks, my dear Sir," replied Kate, "you always speak so flatteringly, that I shall begin to fear lest my foolish heart should grow vain and proud, I am come to ask you to see poor blind William in the morning, he is in sad trouble about his grand-daughter who has left her place in Mr. Goddard's family very suddenly,

and as he fears in disgrace, but at present she is silent on the subject and the poor old man is quite unhappy; I have been talking to her but as yet I have not been able to induce her to confess her fault, though I have some hope that she is silent more from a sense of shame than from sullenness or pride."

"I will see them as soon as possible, my dear, but I must not allow you to lose any more time now as, pardon me if I seem to interfere, but I really do not like you to cross the fields alone so late in the evening, it is past six o'clock and I am sure it is not right that you should walk without an escort."

Kate thanked him for his kind advice and said "Well, dear Dr. Elliott, I will promise you in future to time my visits better, but I am sure you need not fear for my safety, I shall reach the park in a quarter of an hour and after that you know, my dear Sir, I shall be quite at home."

A few more words with an affectionate farewell from the good Doctor, and then Kate takes her homeward path; blithely she trips along and as she enters the little meadows she sings in the cheerfulness of her heart, and gaily moves along in time to the measure of her own sweet voice, now hastily snatching a wild rose as she passes the overhanging boughs, and then a bit of pretty May which is rather overblown though, and is thrown aside as not fit to adorn her little posy, much does she enjoy the sweet evening walk and now she reaches the stile which leads into the last of the

meadows ; this field was a long narrow slip of ground and sloped gradually down to the water ; the path lay across it, and it was but a very short distance from one stile to the opposite one ; just as Kate had descended from the stile and was setting off at a brisk pace she turned her head to the left, and at the top of the field she saw a large and furious looking bull coming directly down towards her ; she would not run but somewhat quickened her pace, hoping to reach the stile before the creature saw her, but in an instant it flew at her with a headlong speed which threatened instant destruction, ploughing up the earth with its horns. Paralysed with fear she stopped, and at that moment she heard a man's voice calling her by name, " Miss Sinclair, Kate, throw yourself on your face ! " instinctively she obeyed, and the furious beast rushed past her unable to check its flight and hurried by its own impetus to the very bottom of the hill ; not a moment was to be lost, yet Kate, faint with alarm, could not move from the earth on which she had thrown herself ; suddenly a powerful arm raised her and carrying her along with great rapidity placed her in safety on the other side of the stile, then jumping quickly over, Carleton, for it was he, supported the almost fainting girl and kindly soothed her alarmed spirits ; a flood of tears relieved her, but finding that she still trembled and looked pale Carleton insisted on her leaning on his arm for support, and gratefully she accepted his proffered aid, though it was some time

before she could command herself sufficiently to express her sense of gratitude, for the presence of mind and courage which had rescued her from such imminent peril and danger. On reaching the house Kate once more thanked him with tearful eyes, and then retired to her room to offer up her praises and thanksgivings to Him who had sent this merciful deliverance ; nor did she appear any more that evening. In vain Carleton watched every opening of the door, he longed to know how the sweet girl was after her sad alarm, but a fear of ridicule kept him silent on the subject, and the evening dragged heavily on as if the wheels of time were clogged and everything had suddenly lost all interest ; he felt that he was unlike himself and after waiting till nine o'clock in the hope of seeing Kate, he suddenly pleaded an excuse and left the drawing-room.

When the Miss Waldegraves retired for the night, Isabel shut the door closely, and turning to Julia said " What could be the matter with Henry Carleton this evening : he was so cold and so distract, and then did you observe that his eyes were constantly and restlessly looking towards the door every time Larkins or Gilbert came into the room ? what is the reason I cannot think but he used to be a most charming person and now he is so changed."

" La Miss," said Neville, " I could soon tell you what's the matter, but I don't want to make mischief and I am sure I should be sorry to take away any-

body's bread, but I know if I was Lady Beauchamp I would soon see a difference in things."

"What can you mean, Neville?" said Julia, "what can you know about Mr. Carleton?"

"Oh very well Miss, I don't want to tell, but you might depend he's no more goodness in him than another might who mightn't be so rich or handsome."

"Oh," said Isabel, "I am really quite anxious to know what you mean, Neville, and now that you have gone so far I insist upon your telling me."

"Well Miss," said Neville, "if you insists I am certainly in duty bound to obey your just commands, and nobody can't blame me if I do my duty; but you must remember, I only just heard the tale at the supper-table and it may not be true; it was the under gardener that told it."

"Told what, Neville? I wish you would not be so slow."

"Well Miss, John said that he was coming round from the flower gardens this evening about five o'clock, when he saw Miss Sinclair come down the shrubbery and walk on towards Granby, but as she often did so he did not think much about it, but that after he had prepared a place or two, for some roretantrums he was returning to the gardens when he saw Mr. Carleton very quickly following the path that Miss Sinclair had taken about half an hour before; 'oh thought I,' says John, 'there's some mischief a brewing and I'll just see what comes of this,' however John was called

away, and the gardener kept him nearly an hour before he could return to the path to Granby, when to his great surprise, Miss Isabel, he saw Mr. Carleton running along the last path field a carrying Miss in his arms, and jumping her over the stile like a great romping school girl, and then he stood and looked in her face ! and then after a bit they walked home arm in arm ! there ! young ladies, I don't wonder at your surprise."

" Surprise ! " said Isabel, " I never in my life heard of such scandalous behaviour, and with an almost stranger too ! for I know she never even saw him till three weeks ago ! I declare Julia I will tell my aunt ! a pretty governess truly she must be ! — well I shall consider it quite my duty to put a stop to such proceedings."

" Oh ! Miss Waldegrave," said Neville, " I do hope you will not mention what I have told you, oh dear Miss you would make a sad confusion, for every one must know that I told you, and I am sure the house will be too hot to hold me if once the servants think I repeat what is said in the servants' hall ; so now pray Miss Isabel, I hope you will promise me to keep it a secret for the present, and depend on it she will soon be found out if that's her behaviour."

" Well Neville," said Isabel, " I see there is some reason for what you say, and at all events I will not be the first to tell the tale ; but I do hope she will not succeed in her vile arts."

When Carleton left the drawing-room so abruptly, he felt so feverish and uncomfortable from the excitement which the afternoon's adventure had occasioned, that he strolled out upon the lawn, and after walking up and down a few moments, he again took his way through the shrubbery path and went towards the scene of Kate's perilous adventure. As he leant with folded arms upon the stile and contemplated the place where so lately he had seen her, as it were, on the verge of destruction, he shuddered and felt a thrill of awe steal over him; her escape had been indeed almost miraculous, as nothing but his accidental presence could have saved her. Then came the thought, "but *was* my presence accidental; was it not mercifully permitted that my agency should be employed to save the life of this sweet girl?" Ay, he thought, she is indeed a sweet girl; and he retraced the progress of an interest which he felt had been hourly increasing in his heart since he first met her. Then came the sudden question, "But to what does all this tend? Shall I permit her to gain such an ascendancy over my feelings without ascertaining that at all events she is free in heart and hand? No; but am I prepared to woo and seek to win her as my bride? Oh, surely this is premature, I may not wish to do so; I am now excited, and tomorrow I shall be myself again." Thus mused Carleton, and long he communed with himself before he retired for the night.

The next day Kate arose quite ill with headache,

and she instantly sought her kind friend Lady Beauchamp, and told her of the adventure which had befallen her the evening before; her account was very simple, and she did not enlarge upon the alarming situation from which Carleton had rescued her, indeed she felt half inclined to withhold his share in the story, but her natural openness rendered all concealment impossible, and with blushing cheeks she related the whole affair. After some little hesitation however she asked Lady Beauchamp not to mention the circumstance to any one but Sir Edmund, as she dreaded the ridicule of the Miss Waldegraves. Lady Beauchamp readily promised this; but she said, "Remember in future, my dear Miss Sinclair, I must not hear that you walk so far alone, for I quite concur with Dr. Elliott in thinking it wrong for you to do so."

A few days after this occurrence Sir Edmund announced his intention of taking all his family to London, fixing the third week in June for their departure; and it was with real delight that Carleton promised to remain at Granby till that time, in order that he might then accompany them to town. Each day had seemed but to increase in his susceptible mind the interest which had been awakened towards Kate, but as yet he had kept his feelings enshrined within the deep recesses of his heart, and with the exception of Sir Edmund, who in such cases was most particularly clear sighted, no one had as yet guessed his secret.

Previously to their leaving the country Lady Beau-

champ determined to ask all her neighbours to dine at Granby, and a very large party was arranged for the twelfth of June ; on which occasion, at Sir Edmund's suggestion, Kate was earnestly requested to appear at dinner, indeed this was so kindly urged that she felt it would be rude to refuse, and therefore though she shrank from the thought of the many annoyances to which it might subject her, she at length consented.

Mr. Carleton was present when the request was made, and watched her varying countenance with much interest, and on hearing her accept the invitation he stole by degrees to her side, and in a very low tone said, " I am indeed rejoiced at your decision, Miss Sinclair." Why did these few words, pronounced too in as calm and studied a manner as he could assume, send the mantling blush to Kate's sweet face, and give to Carleton's heart a sensation of the truest happiness ?

On retiring to rest Kate entered more closely than ever upon her nightly duty of self examination, and as each exciting feeling of the last few days passed in review before her, she felt that her existence possessed indeed some new charm, some happier influence than she had ever before experienced. Did she then love this stranger ? " Oh impossible," she thought ; " no, no, he is very delightful, very fascinating, and he has saved my life ; surely it is gratitude alone which thus interests me so much in his favour ; but," she continued, " how is it that my duties have for the last few days appeared so irk-

some to me? And then came the feeling of regret which ever follows the remembrance of duties neglected, or but ill fulfilled. This must not be, she thought, and now I will once more steadily pursue my allotted course. She kept her resolution, and for some days Carleton never saw her except for a few moments late in the evenings.

Little Alice was now much improved in health, and was looking forward with delight to the prospect of going to London. She had for some days been allowed to rest occasionally in the arms of her nurse or her Mamma, and Kate felt the greatest pleasure in contributing to her amusements. Henrietta and Gertrude had made great progress in their studies, particularly in music, and one evening it was proposed that the children should be permitted to pass an hour in the drawing-room, in order that Sir Edmund might hear them play: this was a great indulgence, and they chatted a great deal to nurse while she dressed them for their visit, and when at seven o'clock they were summoned to the drawing-room they looked quite radiant with beauty and happiness, and Kate felt much delighted at the evident satisfaction which their appearance and improvement afforded to their parents. Carleton too most highly applauded their success in the performance of their pretty duet which they played together.

The Miss Waldegraves were gone to spend the day with a friend in the neighbourhood, and thus for

once Kate felt at ease and happy as in former days ; but she did not remain long in the drawing-room, when the children had finished their visit she left the room with them, and as she passed Carleton opened the door for her, and as she shook hands with him at parting for the night he whispered, " How is it that I see you now so seldom, Miss Sinclair ? "

These words, accompanied as they were with a slight pressure of her soft hand, awakened in Kate's mind fresh food for a " curtain lecture " on her own too great interest in this comparative stranger, albeit she could scarcely banish the feeling of happiness which they had produced.





CHAPTER XX.

HE twelfth of June arrived, and with it came the expected dinner party at Granby Hall. Kate Sinclair was standing at her window ready dressed, and looking more than usually lovely, when the first carriage drove up to the Hall door she instantly retreated and went to wish her little pupils good night before she proceeded to the drawing-room. Little Alice exclaimed, "Oh you dear beautiful Kate, how nice you look in your pretty blue dress, such a sweet colour, so delicate and so pretty, I wish I could see you by and bye, for I am sure you will be the queen of the room."

"Oh hush, hush, Alice, you are a naughty little flatterer." But Kate knelt by her side, and her sweet soft kisses did not speak of much real displeasure. Having taken leave of the little party, she now left them in the care of their good nurse.

A long passage led across from this part of the house to the grand staircase, and then by descending a few steps Kate arrived at the beautiful carved oak door of the great drawing-room, which occupied the

whole width of the centre of the house, and had corresponding doors at each end; here Kate paused, for she felt alarmed at the thought of entering the room alone, but to her great relief she heard voices in the hall below, and standing aside for a moment some of the party came up the staircase preceded by the butler, who throwing open the drawing-room door announced "Sir Charles and Lady Peignton and the Miss Peigntons," and as the two young ladies followed their Papa and Mama, Kate entered at the same moment and keeping close by them avoided the annoyance of being alone. As she passed Carleton who stood near the door he whispered, "I congratulate you on your good management," and she felt thankful for the kind interest which these few words expressed. The half hour before dinner is always a sadly dull affair. People arrived at intervals and then formed themselves into little coteries much as is usual in such cases, until the magic words "Dinner on table, Sir Edmund," induced a general move.

Whether in virtue of her being considered as one of the Miss Peigntons, or whether her own sweet look and manner decided the matter it is not easy to say, but certain it was that just as Carleton reluctantly handed off Miss Isabel at her aunt's suggestion, a very gentlemanly and most agreeable person came and offering his arm to Kate led her down to the dining-room. Having followed Carleton, she found herself placed at the table between him and her new acquaint-

ance, and as her spirits rose in proportion as her mauvaise honte was subdued, she soon became lively, and for a time lost sight of her dependent situation.

The party was large, the dinner perfect, and every thing succeeded "au merveille;" and when the ladies rose to leave the table, Kate had quite lost all feeling of embarrassment: but now a new ordeal awaited her. Ladies are often much greater sticklers for place and precedence than gentlemen, and Kate's extreme beauty was not at all times a recommendation to favour, so that by the time she reached the drawing room, enquiries had been made as to "who that lovely girl next the rich Mr. Carleton could be," and had been answered by the Miss Waldegraves in no very flattering terms, and but for Lady Beauchamp's presence much would have been said in detraction of the too lovely Miss Sinclair; as it was a select party immediately formed round their hostess who stood near the piano, and entered into earnest conversation with her, excluding Kate, and thus leaving her alone and distract by the table which occupied the centre of the room; once or twice she ventured to approach the circle, but the immense range of white uncovered shoulders which opposed her entrance induced her quietly to retreat, and at length she took up a book in self defence. Presently however she was joined by a lady, who seating herself near her pretended for a moment to be seeking some print or book, but suddenly she said in a low tone, "I fear Miss Sinclair has quite forgotten me;"

and to Kate's pleased surprise, she recognized Miss Melville, who as soon as she saw her was remembered kindly and cordially shook hands with her. This caused a movement among the assembled guests, who wondered that the "Honourable Miss Melville should shake hands with a Governess;" but thus it ever is, the highly born and really noble have no dread of losing caste, as it were, by noticing kindly those who may in some respects possess fewer advantages, but whose minds and manners entitle them to consideration.

Miss Melville conversed most agreeably for some time and then said, "I should like to introduce you to my two nieces; and taking her with her to the other end of the long room she introduced her to the Miss Annesleys, who were nice pretty unaffected girls, and who made room on the sofa for Kate to join their little party. The windows in this room were placed in very deep recesses, the floors of which being higher than that of the room were approached by two very shallow steps, and when the rich crimson curtains were drawn they formed complete small rooms which were richly carpeted and were furnished with soft ottomans and couches and an elegant small table for lights; these recessed windows, three in number, were now lighted with candles in handsome silver branches, but the curtains were not closed as the evening was warm; and now coffee is handed and the younger ladies divide into small parties, some are already occupying couches in the recesses, and a buzz of silvery voices resounds

through the room; and now the door opens and the gentlemen join the party; music is proposed, and Lady Beauchamp goes to the harp calling her niece Miss Waldegrave to accompany her on the piano; then Carleton is asked to sing, and the young ladies are in ecstasies of delight; but as Kate keeps most cautiously aloof he begins very soon to tire of the scene, and presently escapes into one of the window recesses, from whence he can observe all that takes place in the room. After his retreat the young ladies suddenly found that the music had lost its principal charm, and by degrees the piano was forsaken. Lady Beauchamp, seated on an ottoman and surrounded by the élite of her guests to whom she was making herself most agreeable, attracted the almost envious observation of those who were not of this fortune-favoured group, and many were watching eagerly in the hope of securing some vacated seat near her. Among these was a Mrs. Goddard, whose greatest anxiety at all times was to obtain the notice and patronage of those who either by their rank or fortune held a higher place in society than herself; and though really a kind-hearted goodnatured woman, she became splenetic and almost cross if she felt herself excluded from the principal party in the room. Moreover she was somewhat disposed to use a little art in her mode of address, and her manner was slightly tinged with affectation. Mr. Goddard, a tall thin sallow man, with very straight intractable black hair, which, though most sedulously pressed down in shining

masses on his rather well shaped head, resolutely stands out again straight from the temples, and requires constant attention to prevent the outline from presenting the figure of a well-drilled mop. His neckcloth is very tight, his waistcoat white, and his whole appearance very juvenile for a clergyman of eight and thirty, indeed he is frequently mistaken for five and twenty to his great delight. He is standing close by Mrs. Goddard, who evidently feels some alarm lest some one should think her neglected by the rest of the party, so with rather an increase of colour she tells "Edward" that she wishes he would go and talk to Miss Melville or the Miss Waldegraves, and just then she spies out a vacant corner next to Lady Beauchamp, of which she takes possession with rather more haste than grace; and then while she hopes she is unobserved dexterously draws the little pink feather which adorns her new head dress into a more conspicuous angle, and replaces her ringlets to the best advantage, then taking a favorable moment for addressing her hostess, she says, "Dear Lady Beauchamp, I have been quite au désespoir at not being near you till now. It seems such a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and may I ask who is that lovely girl that I am told is a visiter of yours, I am sure I quite regret not having called on her and on your nieces."

"Oh," said Lady Beauchamp, "I conclude you mean that young lady in a pale blue dress?"

"Ah yes, that one next the Miss Annesleys."

" That is Miss Sinclair," said Lady Beauchamp.

" And *who* is she, Lady Beauchamp? a relation of yours?"

" Oh no, she is the governess of my two little girls."

" Dear me," said Mrs. Goddard, how very unfortunate, I assure you—I really took her for—"

" Oh pray do not apologize," said Lady Beauchamp, " I assure you whatever you thought of Miss Sinclair will hardly exceed her merits; she is a perfect lady by birth and education, and I am only too happy to have such an excellent person as the guardian of my little girls, I only hope they will follow her bright example."

" Dear me, how very fortunate you have been, Lady Beauchamp—I find it so difficult to find a proper governess for Charlotte and Matilda, indeed I would much rather teach them myself than have the restraint of a governess in the house."

" Depend upon it, my dear Mrs. Goddard," said Lady Beauchamp, " it is our own fault if they become 'a restraint,' I should most cautiously choose such a one as would be a fitting companion for myself, otherwise I should feel no confidence in allowing her to direct the minds and manners of my children; and as a lady always knows how to conduct herself with propriety and tact, I should never fear that I should be subjected to any intrusions or annoyance."

Poor Mrs. Goddard looked a little bewildered, and half afraid that she had not " got on" so well as usual with Lady Beauchamp, who had now turned to con-

verse with Lady Peignton, and she therefore quietly withdrew herself from the ottoman and walked towards the table, where she found her husband still occupied with some splendid drawings of Australian scenery ; he looked up as she came near him and said, " What's the matter, Jane ? " to which she replied rather pettishly, " Why, matter ? nothing at all, I am spending a delightful evening, and Lady Beauchamp is most agreeable, you always think something is going on wrong."

At this moment a tall and still fine looking woman drew near the Goddards, and with some little hesitation bowed to them, her salutation was acknowledged with much reserve by the lady, but by Mr. Goddard with marked politeness and empressement ; as she passed on she met the Miss Waldegraves crossing the room with the Miss Peigntons, having known these young ladies from the time when as little girls they used to visit Granby Mrs. Singleton offered her hand with some show of warmth, when to her great surprise the tip of one of Isabel's gloved fingers was extended in return, and with a stiff curtsy Miss Waldegrave and her party swept by the surprised Mrs. Singleton.

As soon as they were all out of hearing, Mrs. Goddard said, " I am quite surprised, Edward, to see the notice you bestow on that Mrs. Singleton, did you not observe the cold manner in which those fashionable Miss Waldegraves passed her, depend upon it she is nobody among the *élite*."

"I cannot help that, Jane ; I know she is a perfect lady, and of good though not noble family, and I am quite sure if Mrs. Singleton had arrived here this evening in her own carriage, with servants in handsome liveries, she would have been considered by those very girls a most delightful and desirable acquaintance."

The Miss Waldegraves and their companions in the mean time had seated themselves on a couch just in front of the spot where Carleton had for some time been amusing himself by watching the scenes which we have described, and he now hears Isabel's voice loud in detraction of some one. "Oh," she said, "she may be very lovely, I do not myself think so, but you know people differ so in such matters ; but this I am sure of, a more artful designing girl I never met with, and I wonder Miss Melville could think of noticing her, but she does not know her, that's one thing."

The answer was given in so low a tone that it did not reach Carleton's ear, and he did not know who was the object of Isabel's attack ; however he did not intend to listen, and he instantly rose to leave his place, when he was riveted to the spot by hearing her say, "Oh, I could tell you such a story of that Miss Sinclair ! well, if you will not mention it I do not see why I should keep her secret ; only fancy she was seen the other day in Mr. Carleton's arms in the shrubbery, and he actually jumped her over a stile like a romping school girl."

At this wickedly perverted story Carleton lost all

patience, and stepping hastily forward he said, " Allow me, Miss Waldegrave, to ask from whom did you receive that intelligence, which has indeed been most strangely misrepresented, to say the least of it :" and then turning to Miss Peignton, to whom Isabel had so cruelly calumniated Kate, he said, " It is quite true that in rescuing Miss Sinclair from a furious bull I was under the necessity of conveying her in a fainting state across a meadow and of placing the stile between her and the dangerous animal. I hope, Miss Waldegrave," he continued, " when next you speak of me or Miss Sinclair you will use a little more charitable discretion than you have on this occasion." Slightly bowing, with a curl on his lip which spoke volumes to the now frightened Isabel, he left the room.

Oh what shame and vexation filled the heart of the haughty Isabel, and she saw that Miss Peignton too was quite as much disgusted by her unkind malevolence as Carleton himself, and in a few moments she was left alone to reflect with shame upon her detected spite ; she tried to throw the blame on Neville, but the little monitor within told her in plain terms that she never had believed the story which she had so shamefully promulgated contrary to her promise, and that when she began to speak on the subject she had felt convinced in her own mind that the whole had originated in some mistake, and the proud haughty girl felt all the humiliation which she deserved.

Carriages were now announced, and the party sepa-

rated. Miss Melville shook hands with Kate at parting, and turning to Lady Beauchamp said, "I have known this young lady before, and a brother of hers quite won my heart one day. By the bye, Miss Sinclair, I hear he has found a kind patron in Sir Archibald Munroe, who is a connexion of mine, and I hope when you come to town I shall have the pleasure of meeting you both in —— Street."

And now the room is cleared, and Kate feels a little, perhaps not a little disappointed and vexed at having lost sight of Carleton so much; he had "scarcely spoken to her since dinner." And when she laid her gentle head upon the pillow, she buried her face, and without daring to penetrate their cause shed tears of painful excitement.

And Carleton, where was he? After leaving the drawing-room so suddenly, he rushed down into the hall, and snatching a hat from the stand he went forth into the open air to try to still the angry throbings of his excited frame. A long time he paced up and down the lawn, and then hastily sought a more secluded spot, where in solitude he might collect his scattered thoughts. "Yes," he said to himself, "it is plain that I truly love this dear gentle creature, and shall I permit her fair fame to be traduced without defending her from the assaults of the envious and malevolent? Sweet Kate! to-morrow will I seek thee, and should I fail to win thy love I will no longer expose thee to calumny and wrong. But what if her heart should

already be devoted to another? Yet surely those thrilling blushes which have of late induced a hope that I am not indifferent to her, cannot in so guileless a creature be delusive."

Musing thus for nearly an hour, Carleton continued his lonely walk, and finally resolved that ere the conclusion of another day his fate should be decided.





CHAPTER XXI.

HE following morning found all the party at the breakfast table gloomy and uncomfortable. Isabel was proud and sullen, and Julia no less so, Carleton preoccupé and unwilling to converse, and Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp so much disconcerted and annoyed at the ill behaviour of their nieces, that they felt constrained and silent. However, fortunately for Carleton, it was proposed that Lady Beauchamp should take the children to call on some friends at Aysheton, a village at about ten miles distance from Granby, and as he left the room Sir Edmund said, "Carleton, I believe the Miss Waldegraves intend riding, and will perhaps be glad of your escort."

Carleton had great difficulty in restraining the angry words which rose to his lips; but with a glance at Isabel which dismissed the colour from her cheeks he said, "I thank you, Sir Edmund, but I fear I must decline the honour," and taking up a newspaper he hastily left the room.

Sir Edmund easily imagined that he had been dis-

gusted by some new impertinence of Isabel's, and as he really wished for an opportunity of telling her how much her conduct distressed him, he decided on accompanying them himself in their morning ride.

The cavalcade soon set forth, it was a brilliant morning, and as Kate watched them from her window taking their way through the park, she half wished she could have joined the party. However, after waiting some time expecting to see Carleton follow them, she came to the conclusion that he was not going, and she suddenly felt that she would much rather remain quietly at home ; but she thought possibly he is gone on in advance. Oh yes, that is the case, I dare say, for he would not prefer being alone, and a gentle sigh escaped her. Blushing as she detected herself indulging in this little reverie about a person in " whom she could not really feel any particular interest," Kate resolved to seek some occupation, but what should it be ? The children were gone out, and the thoughts of the last evening's party occupied her mind so much, that she felt sadly unsettled. After some hesitation, she thought she would take a book and stroll slowly to some favourite spot in the park, where she might sit and read without interruption. As she crossed the hall she met the butler with letters, " Any for me, Gilbert ? "

" Yes, Miss Sinclair;" and looking over the packet in his hand he gave her a letter from her brother Charles. Taking this with her, and shading herself

under an umbrella from the burning heat of the sun, Kate slowly pursued her way along the path which led to the "Fairy Dell," where she had first seen Carleton, the thought of whom it must be owned occupied her mind so much that she almost forgot the anxiety she had previously felt to receive an account of her dear brother's progress in his new situation. On reaching her favourite spot however, she seated herself on a shady bank, and opening Charles's letter she read as follows—

"MY DEAREST SISTER,

"I HAVE been intending for some days to write to you, for I really long to tell you some of the strange events which have occurred since I wrote my last letter to you. I think I told you that soon after I came into this street to live I met our old friend Miss Hartop, who said that she was now staying with a widow lady, a Mrs. Marston who occupied a nice house very near to my lodgings, and she kindly proposed my calling on her there, assuring me that I should receive a kind welcome from her friends. I was of course very glad of a little change after my office duties were ended, so I availed myself of her kind invitation on the very next evening, and I can never forget my kind reception. Mrs. Marston is a delightful person; I should think she must be older than she appears, but I almost thought her pretty she has so sweet an expression of countenance, and her little girls are quite

perfection. Well, after paying two or three visits, for they insisted on my coming frequently, imagine my surprise when one evening that eccentric old Gentleman, Mr. Crosby, entered the room and addressed Mrs. Marston as his niece. He spoke in his usual way, so shortly and almost rudely that I thought of taking my hat and wishing him good evening; however Mrs. Marston gave me a kind look and I stayed on. In a few minutes tea was announced, and I found that Mr. Crosby meant to stay. When Miss Hartop and the girls joined us, the old Gentleman was so kind, so gentle in his manner to *them* that he quite won my heart, and after a time he began talking very kindly to me also; and when he went away he said, ‘Some day when you have leisure, come and see me,’ and he gave me his card. You may be sure, my dear Kate, I lost no time, but the first day that I could obtain leave of absence I went to visit him; I soon found his house, which is not above a mile from Belmont, and a delightfully comfortable place it is. He was most kind, and talked to me a great deal about poor little Henry, I cannot think why he feels so much interest in children. I shall tire you with this long story, Kate; but I must tell you that since my visit to him he has been so affectionate in his manner that he seems more like a father than a person whom I have so lately considered as a stranger; and last evening when I returned to my lodgings I found a present from him, consisting of a very handsome flute and a nice box of colours,

and I am to dine with him again to-morrow. He wished me to spend Sunday with him, but I always pass that day with my dear father and mother; by the bye, you cannot think how nicely they are getting on ; Papa's pictures sell for such a price ! and then *your* generous kind remittances, dearest sister, and my mite as I call it, make up a welcome increase to their slender income, and they are now, thank God, quite comfortable and happy. Honor and Rory look as blithe as larks, and I suppose soon they will be thinking of entering the blissful state of matrimony. Well this is indeed a long letter. God bless you, my darling Kate.

“ Ever your affectionate brother,
“ CHARLES SINCLAIR.”

Kate had been so deeply interested in her brother's letter that she had not noticed the approach of Carleton, who with gentle steps had stolen to her side, and now when he addressed her by name she started and coloured with pleased surprise, and then of course said that which was the least calculated to remove the impression which her agitation might have conveyed when she blushingly avowed that she “ thought Mr. Carleton was gone with the party to Aysheton,” and then Carleton is encouraged by this to take her hand and to look with those soft though brilliant eyes of his into her sweet face while in tender tones he says, “ And you *did* think of me then, Kate ! ”

It is the first time he ever thus addressed her, yet she does not withdraw her hand or look very angry, so he takes courage and begins a tale of soft affection, which as it was intended for her ear only we will not intrude, but leave him fully to explain the rise and progress of this feeling in his heart of hearts, and having allowed them a full hour for these explanations we will venture again to take a peep at them. O there they are ! just coming forth from that Fairy Dell. Carleton looks brightly, beamingly happy ; and Kate has a lovely carmine tint upon her cheek which speaks of emotion, and the long fringes of her deep blue eyes are still moistened by tears of tender affection. Well, well it is a plain case ; our friend Carleton has not been unsuccessful in his suit ; and now they turn towards the garden—O they have just seen the gardeners leave the grounds, for the servants' dinner bell rang five minutes since ;—yes, yes, the garden will be a quiet place for a tête à tête ; and now they reach the garden door—and I declare they have made some progress, for there is Carleton holding Kate's hand in his.—As they enter the green-house Kate says, “I fear I am sadly selfish to have consented to become your portionless bride and to bring upon you perhaps a share of the slights which my dependent situation has produced ;—what will your friends, your family say, Mr. Carleton, to your choosing an humble governess in preference to one of higher rank and fortune ?”

“ I, too, my dear Miss Sinclair—pshaw, no, I must call you my own dear *Kate*; I *may* now!—well then, my own *Kate*, I have a confession to make which may induce you to think that even in respect of birth and rank you are my superior, though I trust what I shall confide to you will not lead to any change in your sentiments towards me. You talk of my family,—alas! I have none, or at least none who acknowledge me. I was sent to England for education by a gentleman in India who had adopted me, and who afterwards left me all his property, and the circumstances which induced him to protect me are known to my guardian, Sir Archibald Monroe, but as he thought a knowledge of them would serve only to unsettle me he has hitherto refused to explain them—but you will not desert me, *Kate*, even if I should prove to be of less noble extraction than yourself? ”

A gentle pressure of the arm on which she leant was her only reply, but presently she said, “ You have agreed that I ought not to promise to be yours, Mr. Carleton, till I have written to obtain my parents’ consent, and I think I must not meet you again on this subject till you receive their answer; do you acquiesce in this opinion, and am I permitted to tell my kind friend here what has already passed between us? ”

“ O yes, certainly,” replied Carleton, although it must be confessed he felt unwilling to wait so long ere he could claim another interview with his beloved *Kate*.

On her return to the house Kate went instantly to her room, well pleased to find that Lady Beauchamp and the rest of the party were not yet come back from their excursion, and long and pleasantly did she muse on the happy prospect which now opened before her; —yes she felt that she truly loved the generous unselfish young man who had thus for her sake braved the opinions of the world by seeking as his wife one who had been occupying a situation of dependence, and whose portionless state would have deterred most men of his pretensions from such an engagement. She now sat down and wrote an account of all that had taken place to her mother, and confessed to that most tender friend the real state of her affections. In the meantime Carleton wrote to Mr. Sinclair and confided to him his sincere attachment to Kate, explaining fully such of his circumstances as he deemed needful and earnestly entreating his sanction to an engagement on which, as he said, "his future happiness depended." And now, though nothing doubting that the answer to his letter will be a favourable one, he resolves to await its arrival before he permits his secret to be generally known in the family circle, although towards Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp he thinks it right to lay aside all reserve: receiving from them the most earnest and sincere congratulation his heart is filled with delight as they enlarge upon the merits of the sweet and amiable character of her whom he now hopes ere long will be his bride.

Lady Beauchamp lost no time in seeking Kate, and her gentle sympathy, so sweetly expressed, induces the trembling girl to hide her blushing face on the shoulder of this kind friend, who impresses on her cheek a kiss of tender sympathy and whispers, "God bless you, my dearest Kate!"

But despite their wish and intention to keep their secret for a time, they find it almost impossible to evade the scrutiny of Miss Isabel's jealous eyes; she really seems to have no occupation but that of watching them, and it is plain that she takes every opportunity of interrupting any word or look which she fancies betrays interest towards each other, and then she wearies her sister with ill-natured animadversions upon "that governess," as she now always calls her.

One evening Carleton asked Kate to sing a favourite little song of his, the concluding words of which were, "I'll never cease loving thee,"—and sweetly, thrillingly she sings, while her lover stands close by her side he contrived as he thought unobserved to whisper, "*Remember I shall claim this as a promise, Kate;*" but on looking up Isabel as usual had her large eyes fixed upon them both, and when she retired for the night she told Julia that "as to 'that governess' it was quite disgraceful the way in which she was trying to entrap Henry Carleton, and that her songs were sung entirely for that purpose she knew."

"Ah Miss," said Neville, "I believe she will be

clever enough to win him, for from all I hear she is likely enough to be Mrs. Carleton some day."

"I wish, Neville, said Isabel, you would keep your opinions to yourself; I declare I am astonished that any one should pretend to think that Mr. Carleton would lower himself by marrying a governess!"

Neville, who felt a secret pleasure in tormenting her proud ill-conducted young lady, now looked so provokingly sly and smiled with so much meaning, that Isabel was quite thrown off her guard, and she said in a haughty imperious manner, "I request, Neville, you will instantly leave the room, and never again dare to mention this subject in my presence."

Neville, who was at the moment engaged in folding her young lady's muslin dress which she had just taken off, now hastily and almost rudely threw it across the back of a chair, and tossing her head obeyed the imperious mandate, leaving Isabel rather at a loss how to dispense with her services. Very angry and irritated she now found the room oppressively warm, and pettishly approaching the window she threw it open, admitting a sudden draught of air which instantly extinguished her light: it was however a bright moonlight night, so for a few moments she stood enjoying the effect of the cooling breeze upon her heated brow. Meantime Julia had escaped, not liking to remain with her sister while she was under the influence of ill-humour, and Kate Sinclair had been sitting quietly reading for a few minutes in her own room, but at

this moment she felt greatly inclined to steal into little Alice's nursery as she thought the child had looked a little feverish when she went to bed. Putting on a shawl, therefore, over her dressing-gown she gently approached the couch of the now sleeping Alice, setting down her candle she knelt by the side of the little invalid and gently kissed her sweetly-parted lips. At this moment a shriek from Isabel's room alarmed her, and in another instant she distinctly heard the words "O help! some one help me! Fire! fire!"

Snatching a large woollen cloak of the nurse's which hung in the room Kate rushed towards Miss Waldegrave's apartment, where to her horror she perceived Isabel, with her dress on fire, vainly endeavouring to stop the progress of the flames which had already nearly consumed the muslin frock which Neville had thrown on the chair. With admirable presence of mind Kate rushed towards her, cautiously holding the woollen cloak so as to prevent the flames from communicating with her own thin dressing-gown, then wrapping the cloak all over the terrified girl she presently succeeded in putting out the flames, though not before poor Isabel's beautiful neck and arms were much scorched and her hair slightly singed. All this was the work of a few seconds. Kate now gently placed Isabel on her bed, and then ran to fetch Neville, who however had no inclination to render any assistance and angrily muttered that Miss Waldegrave might help herself if she liked. Kate lost no time in

returning to Isabel's room and in a few moments Neville appeared: on examination they found that Isabel, though in very great pain and alarm, had sustained no great degree of injury, and as she did not seem inclined to avail herself of Kate's services any longer she soon left her in Neville's charge, thinking it unnecessary to disturb Lady Beauchamp or to call any other member of the family; she determined however to sit for some time in her room before she went to bed in case any further help should be needful, and she almost immediately afterwards heard Neville pass her door with a hasty step. After waiting nearly half-an-hour longer, thinking every moment that the servant would return, she began to feel assured that poor Isabel was left alone for the night, and thinking she must be suffering very much from pain and from the alarmed state of her spirits she again crept softly to her bedside and found her so much worse than she had anticipated that she offered to bathe the shoulders with a cooling lotion. Confused and really ill, Isabel did not recognize her kind assistant, but concluding it was her servant she asked for something to drink in her usual peremptory cross tone which rather disconcerted Kate; however she thought to herself, "Well, she is in sad pain, poor girl, I must make allowances for her," and returning to her own room she carefully selected such things from her little medicine chest as she thought might tend to allay the burning heat of the scorched arms and neck. Accustomed for a long

time to attend the poor and to administer to their wants, Kate well knew what would be most efficacious in this case, and taking with her a slight sudorific she again went to the suffering girl's assistance, and firmly but gently she applied all the needful remedies, nor did she leave Isabel for the whole of the night though she continued sleeping, or rather dozing, even while Kate was employed in applying her cooling remedies.

Towards the dawn of day Isabel roused herself from the sort of lethargy into which she had been thrown by her medicine, and quietly opening the curtain of her bed she was surprised at seeing Kate sitting in her loose dressing-gown reading. Uttering a cry of surprise she said "Miss Sinclair!—you here? where then is Neville?"

Kate gently drew near her and said, "Pray be calm, Miss Waldegrave, I am here because I could not bear to remain sleeping while you were alone and suffering such pain."

Isabel, yes, the haughty Isabel buried her face on her pillow and wept tears of shame and remorse. She knew now whose were the gentle kind hands which had through the weary hours of the long night been ministering to her ease and comfort, and though still too proud to confess her faults aloud, yet she vainly tried to still the monitor within which so loudly proclaimed her unworthiness of such consideration at Miss Sinclair's hands. Kate now again attended to her in-

juries, and had the satisfaction of finding that all inflammation was rapidly disappearing, and to Isabel's question, "Do you think I shall be much disfigured?" she answered cheeringly and encouragingly that she hoped and believed no scar even would remain.

As soon as the servants were up Kate sent off a groom to fetch the nearest surgeon, who soon arrived, and after complimenting Miss Sinclair on her care and skill pronounced a full confirmation of her opinion that Isabel would very soon lose all the ill effects of her accident, which she now explained had arisen from her having dropped a vesta match upon the muslin dress near which she was standing in the dark after her candle had been extinguished by the opening of her window.

In a few days Isabel was again able to join the party below, and every one observed that even on her ill-regulated mind this lesson of gentle forbearance and forgiveness of injuries had not been thrown away, for during the short time which remained of her stay at Granby Isabel never again spoke of Kate with unkindness or disrespect, and on the day of her departure she sought an opportunity of taking leave of the kind-hearted girl and said while holding her hand, "*Can you forgive me?*" A kindly pressure of Kate's soft hand was the only answer, but the gentle tearful look by which it was accompanied spoke volumes to the now penitent heart of Isabel Waldegrave.

Soon after the departure of the Miss Waldegraves

had taken place a letter arrived from Mr. Sinclair, containing, as might have been expected, a full consent to Carleton's proposal—and now her engagement is openly avowed, and a few days of perfect happiness intervene before they leave the scene which has given rise to so much interest to both, and Lady Beauchamp kindly made such arrangements as should leave Kate free to occupy her time as might be most pleasant to her, while she herself devoted her mornings to her children. Kate frequently went with Carleton to visit the poor people at Granby, and more than one ill-timed though kindly-intended remark brought to Kate's cheek that ready blush of soft emotion so precious in the eyes of her lover. Old blind William had heard from the servants at the Hall that Miss Sinclair was to be married to the rich Mr. Carleton, and one day when they were standing at his garden gate talking to him he said, "Well, Miss, I pray the Lord night and day that you and the noble gentleman may find true happiness and live together in unity and love all the days of your life;" to which Carleton said, "Thanks, my good old friend, I must say Amen to that kind wish," and as he turned away he pressed the hand of his beloved Kate and whispered, "You, too, dearest, will add *yours*, will you not?"—And now they crossed the green and strolled to Dr. Elliott's, who received them with much affection; when they had been with him a few minutes in his comfortable study he said, "My dear young friends, I am sure you

will forgive me if I venture to express to you the joy I feel at hearing of your mutual attachment ; nothing could have given me more sincere pleasure ; and when it shall please the Almighty to bid my labours cease, I shall truly rejoice in the happiness which will await my precious flock, for I am certain you, my dear Mr. Carleton, will never lose sight of their eternal interests, and my sweet Kate will I am sure, be a tender comforting friend to all my people. May God bless you both and make you truly happy."

We must now pass over some little time ;—Granby Hall is deserted, and Sir Edmund and all his family have just taken possession of a nice house very near to Sir Archibald Munroe's ; Kate is the acknowledged *fiancée* of Carleton, though she still fulfils her duties as governess to her dear little pupils, for she feels that her parents still require her aid.

Soon after her arrival in London she went to see all the dear party in —— Street and found them still occupying the room which she and Charles had so skilfully arranged on their first arrival there. It would be impossible to describe the joy which her return conveyed to the happy group assembled ; suffice it to say that it was as sincere, as unfeigned, joy and happiness as ever befell mortal creatures. Honor wept aloud as usual, and as usual read an Irish lecture upon the "fools of tares" which always did so trouble her ; the children never tired of looking at her dear face, Miss Moffat was in an ecstasy of delight, and all hailed

with the truest pleasure the prospect of a renewed intercourse with one so dearly and justly beloved.

A few days after Kate's first visit to her parents Sir Edmund proposed that a general *réunion* should take place at his house, and Carleton listened with much pleasure to the proposed arrangement. "Thursday will be dear Kate's birthday," said Lady Beauchamp, "and I am sure they would all like to pass that day with her."

"Well then," said Sir Edmund, "will you write a note to invite them all for that day, my dear Gertrude, and I will get Sir Archibald to join our party. Perhaps, Carleton," he added, "you and Kate will convey our invitation and bring us, I hope, a satisfactory answer."

Carleton, who really wished to become acquainted with a family in whom he felt so deeply interested, readily accepted this commission, and he had no difficulty in persuading Kate to accompany him in his walk to — Street. We will not dwell upon the manner of Carleton's introduction to the family of his beloved Kate, but it will be as well to say that they were all mutually pleased with each other, and that Mrs. Sinclair was quite charmed with her handsome gentlemanly son-in-law elect, and felt not a little elated at her dear Kate's good fortune.

The invitation was cordially accepted, and the two little girls were made happy by a special little note from Lady Beauchamp requesting that they would

come in the morning and spend the whole day with her children.

On leaving — Street Carleton and Kate proceeded to call on Miss Hartop at Mrs. Marston's, having previously appointed that Charles should meet them there. When they arrived, however, the servant told them that Charles was not yet come but would soon be there, and they went into the drawing-room to wait for him. On entering they perceived an old gentleman standing at the window evidently watching for some one, but as he did not move or turn his head they all sat down to await Charles's arrival. Presently Miss Hartop came into the room and received Kate with affectionate warmth, and then turning to Carleton she held out her hand and said, "I must not wait for a formal introduction to you, Mr. Carleton, you will I am sure pardon this freedom in an old friend of Miss Sinclair's."

During this somewhat lengthy speech the old gentleman had stolen a look of interest towards the party, and now came forward and looking earnestly at Kate he said, "Miss Sinclair, hey? Charles Sinclair's sister, I presume;" and Kate holds out her hand with her own peculiar frank manner and says, "I am truly glad to have an opportunity of thanking Mr. Crosby for all his kindness to my dear brother."

"Pshaw! pshaw! I won't have thanks from any body—but however I am glad to see you, Miss Sinclair, and here comes Charles, who will I daresay be

still more pleased to see you ; and now Charles rushes in and embraces Kate with such warmth that the rest of the party laugh at him, and then he is introduced to Carleton who shakes hands with him with real affectionate interest, and then Charles introduces Carleton to "his kind friend Mr. Crosby," upon which, to his great surprise, the old gentleman with his usual abruptness and with an impatient gesture walks to the window and after standing there a few moments makes one of his hasty retreats and is seen no more that day, and Charles feels convinced that he has thought it a liberty in him to venture unasked to introduce a stranger to his notice, which occasions him some uneasiness, but he is a good deal cheered by the kind manner of his new friend Carleton, and gladly accepts the kind invitation from Sir Edward ; Miss Hartop too is included and gladly promises to join the party.

The evening after this meeting at Mrs. Marston's our old acquaintance Mrs. Fairly was looking over the blind of the open window of her own little room at Mr. Crosby's. The roses are in rich bloom, and the perfume of the sweet mignonette beneath her window is a most especial delight to the worthy old house-keeper, who is talking to some one on the lawn. " Well, as I was saying, Flitters, I can assure you the favour that Master feels for that young gentleman is quite surprising, and I really do think it will end in his coming to live here altogether ;—well I like the

dear lad I will own, but I want to find out why master is so very pertickler fond of him."

" Didn't you say, Fairly, that your master had a child once, and mightn't this Master Sinclair put him in mind of him some way, don't you think? " said Mrs. Flitters.

" O no," said Fairly, " I cannot find out that ever he had a child, and now that I know he is so fond of his niece's children I think 'tis a sort of insanity like that makes him so anxious after children. Well I declare there is Master Charles just coming; however master's in a fine mood I can tell him, and if *he* can make him in a good humour it's more than I can to-day; " and now the bell rings and Fairly goes to open the door for Charles, who enters without saying a word, places his hat on the stand and turns in at the door which leads to the room we have before described as Mr. Crosby's study. Here, seated in his easy chair, he finds his good old friend, and Charles feels a little vexed at perceiving that he is less warm and cordial than he has been of late, so the moment Fairly has closed the door Charles says, " I fear, my dear sir, I have displeased you, and I am come to apologize."

" No, no, not a bit, my dear boy; I am sadly tried, but have patience with me, and this dark hour will pass away: but be assured *you* have not vexed me. Come, Charles, sit down; I like your open manly ways, my dear boy, and when I see any fault you will

not find it out by any churlishness on my part. No, no, I shall tell you in plain English that I am not pleased, but I am too much your real friend to withdraw from you in anger: and now, Charles, I have made up my mind to tell you the cause of all that you may think strange in me, and by and bye you shall hear all my sad story, but as we shall be interrupted if I begin it immediately we will for a time defer it. So now ring the bell, and let us have some coffee."

But the explanation was not then to take place, for almost immediately after the tea-things were withdrawn Mr. Crosby rose and began to pace the room, and Charles felt quite shocked at the expression of anguish which the old man's face assumed; and after a long and ineffectual struggle he covered his face with his hands, and sinking into his chair said in broken accents, "Not now, not now; another time, dear boy, when I am better, you shall know all, but leave me now;" and Charles gently and kindly soothed him for a few moments, and then obeyed his request and left him alone with his sorrow. But as Fairly lighted him to find his hat, he said, "I think your good master seems very ill to-night, Mrs. Fairly; perhaps you will see him presently." And Fairly promising to pay him every attention, civilly wished Charles good night as she closed the door.

Kate's birthday is arrived, and what a sweet smiling creature she looks as she enters the elegant morning room where all the party are assembled to greet her

with words of love and affection. Carleton claims her first notice, and then follow her own two little pet sisters, Emily and Rosa, who bring forward with them sweet Henrietta and Gertrude, and there seated in an easy chair is the patient little Alice, who presents Kate with a lovely nosegay; and then Sir Edmund and Lady Beauchamp come in to join the group, and Sir Edmund begs her to accept a most elegant watch and chain as a keepsake, and this is the signal for a whole shower of birthday offerings, and Kate is almost overpowered by the kindness and affection of all these dear friends. Later in the day her dear father and mother arrive, and soon after Charles makes his appearance, and by the time the dressing bell rings, all are become quite intimately acquainted with each other, and Mrs. Sinclair finds herself quite cosily settling plans for Kate with Lady Beauchamp, who half an hour before was a comparative stranger.

When they met in the drawing-room before dinner, they found only in addition to their family party Miss Hartop and Sir Archibald Munroe, who was evidently greatly surprised at Kate's surpassing beauty, and from the moment she entered the room he devoted the whole of his attention to her.

As soon as the party were assembled Sir Edmund said, "I find, Carleton, you and Sir Archibald have determined to take this opportunity of explaining fully the circumstances which led to his guardianship of you; and as all who are most interested in this recital

are present, I propose that after dinner we meet in my study, in order to hear some papers read on this subject."

The party having acquiesced, Sir Edmund led the way with Mrs. Sinclair, and all were soon seated at the dinner table: Carleton of course was next to Kate, and seeing her look a little grave he said, "Do not fear, dearest Kate, I am sure we have nothing to dread from Sir Archibald's statement, and I shall really be quite thankful when I am freed from all sense of mystery and uncertainty."

Miss Hartop, who was sitting on Carleton's right hand, said, "Perhaps, Mr. Carleton, you would prefer my joining the children's party after dinner, for as I am a stranger you may not like me to be present during the explanation of which Sir Archibald spoke just now?"

"A stranger, my good lady," said Carleton, "pardon me, but I am presuming enough to hope that all the friends of Miss Sinclair will permit me to share their kindly feeling, and will extend to me the friendship which heretofore has belonged exclusively to her dear self: no, no, I must indeed consider *you* at all events in the light of an old friend, and I beg you will not hesitate to join us in the study."

When the ladies left the dining-room they all proceeded at once to Sir Edmund's private study, and here in a few minutes they were joined by the now impatient Carleton and the rest of the gentlemen, and

almost immediately Sir Archibald entered, and placed on the table a small packet containing letters, and a larger one, the contents of which for a time he kept concealed.

He immediately opened the interesting subject by saying, "I believe I must begin my story, Carleton, from a period which some time preceded my knowledge of you. I was, as you know, in the early part of my life in India for some years, and here it was my good fortune to become the intimate friend of a gentleman who held a very high civil appointment, and who had just married a most lovely and attractive woman ; this friend, whose name was Fortescue, became much attached to me, and I can truly say I felt for him a brother's love, and for three years after his marriage I spent the greater part of my time in his house. Mrs. Fortescue was some years younger than her husband, and after the birth of a lovely boy she became very delicate, and at length she was ordered to England by her medical advisers, and Fortescue immediately determined to accompany her. On their arrival in this country Fortescue instantly wrote to me, telling me that there appeared but small reason to hope that his beloved wife would be spared, and shortly after I learnt that she was taken from him, and that the child was in a most precarious state. I will not dwell on this part of my story ; the child died, and my friend returned to India almost immediately. On his arrival at B—— he sent for me, and I went instantly to him, when to my sur-

prise I found him seated in his bungalow with a most interesting and lovely child sleeping in his arms, delicate, frail as the little creature was, his beautiful curling hair and long silken eyelashes now softly reposing on his downy cheek, awakened in my mind the liveliest admiration. But Fortescue held out his disengaged hand with such a mournful expression of countenance that I felt this was not a moment for evincing interest in any other but himself: however in a few moments he adverted to the subject, which certainly was uppermost in my thoughts, and said, ‘ You are surprised to see me with this little companion, Munroe; but I can assure you he is my only comfort now, and by and bye I will tell you all his history.’ This he did almost directly, but as I shall read it to you presently in his own words, I will pass it by and proceed to tell you only that this dear child was my friend Harry Carleton. He lived with Mr. Fortescue as his adopted son about five years, and then, when I returned to take possession of my estates in England at my father’s death, he was entrusted to my care, and I promised faithfully to superintend his education till his kind friend Mr. Fortescue should claim him at my hands. The parting was a sad one, and my poor friend, who accompanied us to the vessel which was to convey us to England, left his adopted son with an almost broken heart. Poor Fortescue, he did not long survive our departure, but before his death, having been apprised by his physicians that he could only live a very few

days longer, he made a will in favour of Harry Carleton, leaving him the whole of his immense property, but requested that he might not be educated in idleness, and left to his own decision when he should attain the age of fifteen the choice of his profession, only expressing a hope that he would embrace that of a clergyman : he also requested that he might not be told the contents of some papers which he committed to my care until his path in life was chosen and his marriage decided upon. I have religiously kept my promise, and until this day I have never opened the papers, though I conclude they contain a repetition of the story which I have heard from my dear friend's own lips."

When Sir Archibald reached this part of his narrative, Carleton approached the table, and holding out his hand said, " Does this recital give you pain, my dear kind friend, if so, shall I ——"

" Oh no, dear Harry, not at all, I shall be quite able to fulfil my task ;" and he opened with trembling hand the packet which contained the interesting letter to which he had referred, and with a faltering voice read as follows :—

" MY DEAR KIND FRIEND,

" THE time has arrived when I feel it a duty to put you in possession of a written statement respecting the claims which my beloved Carleton has on my affection, and I will endeavour to retrace the circum-

stances which gave him to my care. You, who witnessed the affection which existed between me and my beloved Constance, my dear, dear wife, will require no words to describe my grief, my heart's sorrow, when it pleased the Almighty to recall her to himself, and when in three short weeks after her death my precious boy, my little Ernest, followed her to the grave. You will I am sure fully understand what was the state of my bereaved heart. I lost no time in taking my passage back to India, determined there to pass the remainder of my days, never again to seek to replace the blessings which I had lost. It is now nearly seven years since I again embarked for this country, our ship was a fine one, and for some time but little occurred to vary the sad monotony of my existence ; I felt like one alone in the world, and though I sought, yes, most earnestly sought to bear my sorrows with Christian resignation, yet I was lonely and wretched, and each day but added to my weight of sorrow. At the end of the seventh week from the day on which we left England a sudden storm arose which drove us out of our course and carried us many degrees westward of our right bearing, and then suddenly ceasing a great calm arose, and for days we laid almost as still as if we were at anchor ; a burning sun rendered the oppressive heat almost insupportable, and we were right glad when in the early morning of the third day a light breeze sprung up and carried us once more bounding along over the waves. We had not proceeded far on this day when we espied

at a distance what was at first taken by the crew to be a large fish or animal of some kind, but on nearing it we perceived that it was the wreck of a small vessel water logged, and drifting along without sail or rudder, and apparently quite deserted by all her crew. Our captain gave orders to lower a boat, and sent four or five of the best sailors to examine the state of the wreck, and I, glad of some occupation which might afford even a temporary excitement, volunteered to join the party. The weather was delightful, and the boat's crew departed in high spirits, for on a long voyage any new adventure is particularly interesting : after rowing for about half an hour we came alongside the unfortunate vessel, which from its appearance we thought must have been some days a wreck, and then with some difficulty we contrived to board her. Nothing of any interest presented itself, and we found no papers or any thing which could denote what vessel she was, and the men proposed returning without venturing to explore the cabins below, when we thought we heard a faint cry which one of the sailors pronounced to be that of a dog, and we all with one accord said, ' Well, let us give the poor creature help if we can ; ' proceeding with extreme caution we contrived to get down to the cabins ; again a wailing cry met my ear, and I thought surely that is like the wail of a sick child.—Alas ! my ear was too well acquainted with such sounds and I instantly directed my steps to the spot from whence I had heard the cry. The door of the cabin was fixed from

the inequalities occasioned by the state of the vessel, but I contrived to wrench it open, and there, stretched on a small cot lay the dead body of a woman, and by her side, with his little curly head nestled upon her cold bosom, rested a little child of perhaps two or even three years old whose sad weeping countenance and famished form elicited a cry of horror from us all. I seized upon my precious prize, I clasped him in my arms and as I felt his little frame resting in childlike confidence upon my breast, I felt a thrill of thankful joy and happiness such as I thought could never again have been excited in my sorrow stricken heart. When we reached our ship I carried him in my arms to my own cabin and laid him on my couch, and still the poor child spoke not but clung to me with affectionate tenderness. Oh, it was almost more than I could bear, he so painfully reminded me of my lost child, my own little Ernest. Nourishment and constant care in a few days restored life and animation to the poor helpless child, and then he tried to talk to me, though I could not understand all he said as he was not able to speak plain for the few words he uttered were of a mixed sort of language ; however I thought he called himself ' Harry Carleton,' and by that name he was known all the rest of our voyage : it was quite understood by every one that I had adopted the dear child whom I vowed I would never forsake. When we reached Calcutta I was obliged immediately to go up the country a long distance, and of course my new treasure

accompanied me; sweet, dear boy, he was the solace of my life. And now, my child, I am told that we shall meet no more in this life. May the Lord God be thy Protector when I am gone."

Sir Archibald here ceased reading; Carleton had long since retreated to a dark corner of the room, where his emotion would pass unobserved, and all the rest of the party had been sympathizing with tears of unfeigned feeling.

Sir Archibald in a few moments said, "At the same time that I received the letter from which I have read this narrative my good friend sent me some little articles of dress which had been preserved, and a miniature with a small gold chain which is I conclude that of my dear Carleton's mother, and if you like to see them I will produce them now."

Every one approached the table when Sir Archibald opened the parcel which he had placed there and took from it a beautiful little velvet frock richly embroidered, and some small cambric shirts, and then he placed in Carleton's hands the miniature of which he had spoken; it represented a lady whose olive complexion and brilliant dark eyes somewhat resembled Carleton's, and with a beating heart he felt that he was looking on the portrait of his mother.

After having allowed a sufficient time for the party in some measure to recover from the effects which this story had left on the minds of all who were so deeply

interested in its hero Miss Hartop broke the silence by saying, " Strange as it may appear indeed to *me* it looks like a direct interposition of Providence; I am persuaded that I have heard a tale which bears so intimate a connexion with the one to which we have just been listening, that I cannot think I should be justified in withholding it." And on being eagerly entreated by Carleton to tell him all she knew, she as succinctly as possible related the story which some months before she had heard from the old almshouse woman at Graysbrook; and great was the interest which it excited in the minds of all, as though there existed no proof that Carleton was indeed the hero of old Nanny's tale, it certainly seemed more than possible that such might prove the case, and after much consideration and discussion Miss Hartop promised to write to the clergyman at Graysbrook to enquire whether the old woman still lived, and should his answer be a favourable one she would immediately go and see her and learn from her own lips the names of her former master and his family.

The short remainder of this eventful evening was passed in much interesting conversation, and before the party separated Kate had blushingly given her consent to Carleton's naming a day for their approaching nuptials, and it was decided that they should be solemnized on the fifth of August.

The unusual absence of her Master and Mistress

left Honor for the first time for many months with some hours at her own disposal ; the children were absent, and in fact Honor, like Othello, found "her occupation gone." At first she thought this would be a delightful holiday, but after putting every room in neat order and even preparing the studio for the next morning, she found it was only four o'clock, and the silence of the house became quite oppressive, so she hastily tied on her pretty little straw bonnet and ran down to Miss Moffat's apartments, and opening the door said, " Och thin, Miss Moffat, I'm bothered intirely with the pace and quietness up there now the Masther and all is gone, and will ye be so kind as to let Maggie just give the word to the milkman when he comes, for troth I'm just famished for the wants of a breath o' the air of heaven, and I'll may be like a rin for half an hour."

To this Miss Moffat most kindly assented and said, " Ye are a just a gude lassie Honor, and ye deserve muckle consideration, and weel may ye sped, for we'll just see all canny while ye are away."

Merrily then did the blithe and honest hearted girl trip down the steps, and then pause a moment to look up and down the street, as if to consider on the course she would pursue, but presently her decision seems made, and she takes her way towards Mrs. Crump's shop, and there finds the old woman in her usual place, but the shop is now decorated with bunches of beautiful summer flowers, and smells luxuriously of fine

fruit and summer salads and vegetables; cool and pleasant is Mrs. Crump's shop on this hot July afternoon, for it is on the shady side of the street, and it has been frequently sprinkled with cold water, and as Honor enters she says, " Well, Mrs. Crump, but ye are a jewel of a woman that's for sartain, for your cool shop is just the very temple of delight this dreadful hot day, an' I'll sit wid ye a bit if ye're not too busy, for our folks is all gone to a grand dinner party and its dull enough I am all alone by meself."

" Gone to a dinner are they, Honor? " enquired Mrs. Crump with wonder painted on her broad good humoured face; " Gone out to a party are they? " and then interrupted by the arrival of a customer, she pinned up her band, and obligingly weighed some cherries, popping the stray ones which fell from the scales into her capacious mouth, and then when the girl was gone she offered a little bunch to Honor, who thanked her kindly and said, " Well they do cry come eat me, that's the truth Mrs. Crump, and I'm intirely obleeeged to ye."

So they continued to eat their cherries for a few moments and to chat about the doings of the Sinclair party. " And so they're all gone to a party; well, Honor, times seems changed, don't they? come you may as well tell me, my lass, for I hear you are a going to have a weddin in your family."

" Ah now surely ye wouldn't be asking me the sacrets of the swate Miss Kate; och thin I'll not tell

ye a word at all at all, bad manners to me to think of spaking of the likes of her."

" Oh then it *is* Miss Kate, is it Honor? well I dare say its all true then what I heard, and I won't ask you any think more on the subject, but I wish 'em luck, and whenever she's married, Honor, mind you throw an old shoe after 'em; *that's* a sacret you Irish bodies didn't know I'll wager a penny. But look here, who's this a coming? well who'd a thought it my gal, why if 'tisn't Mr. Aurory himself;" and Rory it was indeed who now entered the little fruit shop, panting with heat and redder than his neckerchief; but as he approached Honor she blushed and tossed her pretty head and said, " Oh thin, Mr. Rory, ye've found yer own sweet self at last; maybe ye don't know that its a week since you found your way to this part of the world."

" Ah thin, Honor," answered her lover, " don't be afther twitting me with what has been the sorrow of my days entirely; sure hasn't the mother of me been lying on her sick bed, and would I lave the poor blessed ould creature to be afther saking my own pleasure, let alone yours my sweet Honor. There now, ask Mrs. Crump if them frowns is becoming to ye."

" Och Rory, I'm sorry I didn't know that your poor Mother was bad; and is she better now, and will she be getting about again?"

" Why that's kind again, and I knowed ye wouldn't

be angered when ye knowed the truth ; but come now, don't be telling a fib, for I seen ye Monday, an' this is only Thursday me lannen ; come, come, make up all quarrels and come and take a bit of a walk, for it'll be a nice evening after the heat do lave scalding us all to the death of one."

Mrs. Crump, kind soul, had seen clouds gathering on Honor's pretty face from the moment when Rory first presented himself, and finding that interminable band required entire readjustment, she had retired to an inner room, leaving the lovers to settle their quarrels; and now, as she sees a prospect of a termination to this unusual fracas, she came smilingly forth all tight and tidy, and insisting upon their accepting some nice ripe fruit to eat as they pursue their evening ramble, and with many thanks and friendly good wishes to good natured Mrs. Crump, Honor and Rory emerge into the street and rapidly pursue their way towards —— Park. And as they walk kind and loving chat takes place between them, and Rory asks Honor how much longer she " manes to keep him a poor lonely desarted bachelor."

To which Honor replies, " Arrah be aisy wid yer tazing nonsense, Rory, how can I lave them now, they wouldn't like a stranger to see all their troubles, but wait a bit Rory dear, I'll not desave ye ; I," and here she lowered her voice to a whisper, " I love ye truly, dearly Rory, and I'll not deny that its a bit of a trial to me to put ye off so long, but its *duty* Rory, its *duty*,

and by the Lord's blessing I'll strive to do what's right and just."

" That's just like yourself, mavourneen, and it shall niver be said that Rory tempted ye away from your duty : but now machree look here," and forth from his pocket Rory drew the well known little purse, and took from it a five pound note and held it up to her astonished gaze.

" Why, Rory, sure but you've dalings with the ' good people,' but tell me asthore where could ye get such a sight of money all at onct ? "

" Well then, Honor my darling, it was given to me for your dear sake the last time iver I seen ye, and I've been longing to tell ye all about it. Last Monday I comes to your door and I sees little blue-eyed Maggie with her sweet little kind face, so I says, ' Maggie,' says I, ' where's Honor ? ' ' Och,' says she, ' she's up stairs, and there's dear Miss Kate up there, and siccana fine young gentleman,' says she, ' oh he is such a beautiful young man, and Miss Moffat says she's sure and sartain he's a going to marry Miss Kate ; well, I pricked up my ears like at this, and I thought thinks I, ' well I must try to catch a glimpse of them parties,' so I waited, and I hoped I'd soon see your own dear face, but ye was so busy ; well thin I went to Mrs. Crump's and there I staid a bit, and then I wandered back again to your end of the street, and then I stole up the steps again, but I hadn't courage to go in ; so in a moment out comes Miss Kate, and

took me all by surprise like, and she says in her own kind way, ‘ Ah Rory, is that you?’ she says, so I made a leg and pulled off my hat and says, ‘ Shure Miss Kate,’ says I, ‘ and by your lave,’ says I, ‘ its meself entirely, and its glad I am to see ye looking so bright and so beautiful in health,’ says I, ‘ and may ye niver look worse,’ says I. ‘ Thank ye, Rory,’ says she, and turning round to a grand looking fine young gentleman as was following her, she says, ‘ Oh Mr. Cawlting,’ she says, ‘ this is Rory,’ and I heard her whisper something about ‘ good Honor.’ ‘ Oh,’ he says, mighty sweet, ‘ this is good Honor’s lover is it? Ah my lad,’ he says, ‘ you’ll have a jewel of a wife, and I hope you’ll have many years of happiness with her,’ he says, and then he puts Miss Kate on before him, and slips back as if he was looking for his walking stick, and he says, ‘ Now my good fellow, you’ll like to give your pretty Honor a nice new gown or something when the wedding day comes,’ and by the powers he puts this beautiful note for money into my hand, and runs after Miss Kate like a will-o’-the-wisp. So now, mavourneen, onct more I’ve got the manes of buying that little band of gold which’ll make me the happiest boy in all the world beknown and unbeknown, and soon I hope ye’ll say, Rory, I’ll give ye lave to buy it.”

Honor now told her lover that she too had a trifle to add to this immense wealth, for that her dear Miss Kate had given her three bright gold sovereigns, and

before their walk was ended they had in imagination furnished a cottage, provided stores of clothing and comforts for the poor old mother, and performed a thousand acts befitting their kind and generous natures, apparently unwilling to believe that their riches would ever be exhausted.

On the evening which succeeded Kate's birthday Charles went to visit his friend Mr. Crosby who received him with much warmth and kindness, and told him that he felt almost ashamed of having been betrayed into so much emotion when last they met, but he added, "I hope now, my dear boy, I shall feel quite equal to the effort which I promised to make, and if you are really interested in such a surly old fellow as you know me to be, why I will tell you some of the causes which have driven me to take refuge in a manner which is I confess somewhat foreign to my nature, though I do not promise to tell you all the particulars of my past life;—but come, Charles, it is a close warm evening, you shall place my chair near the window and we will take a glass of wine while I tell you my story."

With ready alacrity Charles made the proposed arrangement and then seating himself near his friend he listened to him with affectionate attention while he spoke as follows : "I am the younger son of a baronet, Charles, but as I have a brother still living, a stronger and abler man than myself, I am not likely to succeed to a title which for many long years has

belonged to my family. When I was a lad of your age,—ay, and at that time much of your character and emperament,—I was a great favourite with an uncle, a brother of my dear mother's; this excellent man had very large estates in the West Indies, and having as it were adopted me he took me with him to Barbadoes where the principal part of his property was situated, and I lived with him till I was five-and-twenty, making of course some occasional trips to England at intervals. When this kind uncle died he left me the whole of his property, and I determined to remain some years in the island; ten years past and found me still unmarried, but soon afterwards I met with a young Portuguese lady of good family and of exquisite beauty and sweetness of manner. I will not tire you, Charles, by recounting the progress of my attachment to this lady, suffice it that at the end of about a year after we first met she became my wife. and very shortly afterwards we came to England and I took possession of this house, which was part of the property I inherited from my uncle; here we lived in perfect happiness for two years—at the end of which time my dear wife became so delicate in health that I was advised to take her to a warmer climate. A long voyage was recommended, and I decided on visiting some of my far-off estates. We reached our destination and she rallied considerably, indeed for a year she was apparently in good health, and then, Charles, a dear child—a precious boy—was born to us. O he

was too dear, too much the idol of my heart!"—Here Mr. Crosby rose and paced the room in much agitation. "O Charles, I have no courage to proceed,—I lost her—my wife died, and my boy, my precious boy, was miserably drowned! I cannot look back;—I believe for two or three years I lost my senses;—I went abroad, I became a miser; in imagination I was hoarding for my boy—my little one! time, time, Charles, restored me in some measure and my mind resumed its balance, but the bags of hoarded wealth still tempted me, and had it not been that the portals of my stony heart ever gave way at the sight of children, and their little griefs and sorrows let loose the floodgates of my frozen tears, I should have found no way to escape the sin which then beset me. You will now understand better how I came so deeply and tenderly interested in your little Henry,—he was more like my own lost darling than any I had ever seen, and for the few short months of his little life I could never cease to follow him and watch for him, and in you, my dear boy, although I can trace no personal likeness, yet I delight in feeling that I am beloved by a young and ardent mind, and I cheat myself into the hope that you will be a son to me in future years."

Many, many times had Charles longed to interrupt the narrative;—could it be? could there exist a probability that the story to which he had listened only a few short hours before was indeed connected with the one he had now heard? yet in one or two points there

certainly appeared some similarity in the train of events; however as these thoughts glanced through his mind they were accompanied by the fear of exciting false hopes in the mind of his old friend, and after all he had not mentioned the way in which he had lost his wife and little son, and he dared ask no further questions at that moment; he therefore discreetly abstained from saying a word on the subject which engrossed his every thought, but as soon as Mr. Crosby ceased speaking he drew his chair close by him and putting his head on his shoulder as if he had been indeed his son, he took him by the hand and thanked him with much emotion for his kind and affectionate confidence in him;—unselfish and without a single interested motive in his heart, Charles feared no misinterpretation of his feelings when he said, “And let me strive to fill the void in your heart which these sad trials have occasioned; I will promise, my dear Sir, to fulfil to the utmost of my power every wish you may express, and to obey you as I would my father.”

“I believe you, my dear boy, and I do sincerely hope that for the rest of my short days in this world you will be to me what at your age I was to my dear kind old uncle;—but come, come Charles, I have been selfishly making your young heart sad, and had I not thought it right to let you understand my character aright before you become my adopted son, I should not have troubled you with my sad tale—and now let

your confidence in me be unrestrained, and come to me as if you were indeed my son."

At this moment Fairly opened the door and said, "Shall I bring candles, sir?" and they suddenly discovered that for some little time the moon had afforded them their only light. The interruption occasioned by her entrance put a stop to the conversation, and Charles soon after took his leave.

As he plodded homewards his mind naturally reverted to the story he had just heard, and much as he loved his kind old friend, he could not but observe and lament the total absence of all reference to any Christian feeling or religious impression, but he thought, "Some men are, I know, silent on such subjects, even though they really influence their lives and conduct. Yet surely if he had in a Christian spirit submitted with resignation to the will of God, would he not have found peace, and long ere this have seen and acknowledged the wisdom and mercy of His dispensations. How differently have my dear parents and sweet Kate borne their trials and afflictions! still it is not for me, so young as I am, to sit in judgment on a man of his age. And then, too, he has evinced so many good qualities and traits of disposition that I cannot but hope his heart is under the guidance of religious principles, and I trust he will prove all that I could wish." Thus Charles soliloquised, but soon came the longing desire to discover whether old Nanny's story was in any way connected with that he had just heard from Mr. Crosby.



CHAPTER XXII.

HE next day's post brought Miss Hartop a letter from the clergyman at Graysbrook stating that old Nanny was living and in good health, and on communicating this intelligence to Carleton and the rest of the party who were interested it was arranged that Miss Hartop, with Charles as her escort, should immediately go to Graysbrook, and if she had reason to believe, from old Nanny's statements, that Carleton was the son of her former master, she should if possible bring the old woman to London in order to obtain from her as much information as possible respecting his parents. It was thought expedient, too, that Miss Hartop should take with her the miniature which had been transmitted by Mr. Fortescue, and also some portion of the wearing apparel. And O how Charles's ardent heart leapt as he thought of the possibility which existed that his kind old friend's future happiness might depend on the result of this mission, yet, boy as he was, no word or look betrayed that he had any particular interest beyond what others felt on the occasion.

A brilliant morning dawned on the day so interesting to Charles and his fellow traveller, and by eight o'clock they were well on their way to Graysbrook, and although at this hour it was deliciously cool and pleasant, they very gladly exchanged the dusty streets and roads for the widely-extending commons and bright hills of Surrey, and merrily they chatted as they journeyed towards the pretty village which Miss Hartop always called "her home." The distance from London to Graysbrook was about thirty miles, and it was early in the afternoon that the carriage turned down a narrow lane, when the sight of the little spire of her favourite church was welcomed by Miss Hartop with its usual share of interest. "Here we are then, Charles, see there is the dear little church! and now soon we shall pass by the almshouse; but anxious as I am to see my poor old woman we must not take her by surprise, so we will drive to my cottage first; and now the village green appears, and there is the old Maypole with its withered garlands still hanging on it to remind us of the festivities of May-day, and the school-house. Look, Charles, there are some of the dear good people. Ah I see my arrival will not long be a secret."

Kindly she nodded or spoke to the villagers as she passed them and was greeted with many a heartfelt "God bless you." Soon the carriage stops at the White Cottage, the steps are let down, and Charles hands out his kind-hearted companion, and by the

time they enter the little white gate many of the poor people have assembled to catch a glimpse, and receive a word of kind recognition from their respected benefactress, Miss Hartop, who in the flurry of her spirits has left the precious packet in the carriage, and Charles has to run after it in all the heat as it is now spinning down the hill to the little inn, where the postboy hopes to find a shelter from the heat for himself and his tired horses.

After a few moments passed in consultation as to the best means of gaining the intelligence which they desired from old Nanny, Miss Hartop and Charles set out on their walk to the almshouse. On arriving at the gate, they paused a moment to admire the bright luxuriance of the little gardens now filled with lovely summer flowers, perfuming the air with their delicious fragrance ; and Charles, who for some time had been much confined to the streets of London, was quite in raptures at the sweet country scenes around him. At this moment, "Nanny, the Queen" appeared at her open door. She stood for a moment in the sunlight, shading her eyes with her hand from the too sudden effect of the light, resting as usual on her large staff for support, and peering forth to see who were the strangers at the garden gate. On seeing Nanny, Miss Hartop walked rapidly towards her and taking her by the hand, was received by the faithful creature with her usual warmth and affection : and with unfeigned delight she said, "Oh my dear lady, is it

you indeed? well this is a pleasure surely but I hope Miss nothing has happened wrong like to bring you back again so quick?"

"Oh no, Nanny, nothing: I had a reason for wishing to pass a few hours here, but I hope to return to Mrs. Marston to-morrow. I am now come to sit a little while with *you*, in your nice cool room: but first I must speak to that young gentleman, by the bye Nanny, that is Mr. Charles Sinclair of whom you have so often heard. By this time Charles obeying a slight signal from Miss Hartop joined them and speaking kindly to the old woman, they all three entered the house together.

After a few moments of desultory conversation, during which Miss Hartop was endeavouring to lead to the subject of her visit, she said, "Do you remember my long visit to you on that cold winter evening, Nanny? I have often thought with much interest of the sad tale you told me on that occasion: but you did not tell me the *name* of your old master, should you *mind* telling me—I much wish to hear it."

"Oh Maam! Oh Miss Hartop! don't, oh please don't talk of that sad business. I can't, indeed I can't tell anything more about it." Old Nanny paused, then trembling with emotion, she rocked herself backwards and forwards in her high-backed chair, and looked distressed and agitated.

"Well, well, Nanny, I did not mean to vex you, and I am sorry I have given you pain; but I have a

reason which I will explain at another time for asking you this question : believe me it was not dictated by mere curiosity."

"Oh no Miss," said Nanny, "I know you too well to think it could be that ; but you know Miss, I always avoid to talk of that time, and his name, I have never let pass my lip since then ; still, I know I *ought* not to refuse *your* father's child any thing she may desire. Again there was a silence, and then with an effort which seemed almost to paralyze the poor creature, she said, "Well Miss, God's will be done : his *name* was *Carlington*."

This was a death-blow to poor Charles's hopes, yet to Miss Hartop it brought an almost certainty that Henry Carleton was indeed the son of Nanny's master, although from his imperfect speaking at the time when he was found in the wreck, the name had been slightly altered. Proceeding now very cautiously, she soon quite satisfied herself that she was right in this conjecture, and presently she ventured to show the miniature to Nanny, which to her satisfaction and delight was instantly recognized as that of the dearly-loved mother of the lost child. Although pained and grieved at witnessing the agitation with which the disclosure was received, Miss Hartop now gradually informed Nanny that Carleton lived and that she should soon see him !— Poor Nanny ! how she wept and clasped those withered hands, and blessed God for permitting such happy tidings to be brought.

Miss Hartop left her a few moments that she might recover her composure, and then it was settled that she should return with them to London, and on the following day they all arrived in safety at Sir Edmund's, where Nanny was most kindly received; but as she had already endured so much unusual excitement and fatigue, Lady Beauchamp directed that she should remain quietly in the neat little room which had been prepared for her, and requested that she might not be disturbed for some hours. Meanwhile Carleton was apprised of what had occurred, and learned with much interest that his old nurse had recognized the miniature of his mother, though he much regretted that no clue had been obtained by which he might discover who his parents were, and whether his father still was living.

In a few hours old Nanny was sufficiently recovered to admit of her seeing her "dear young master," as she already designated Carleton: and as it was evident she was impatiently pining for the interview it was no longer delayed; when he entered the room she rose to meet him, and tried to receive him with the respect due to a stranger and a gentleman; but at the sight of him all restraint gave way, and suddenly grasping the hand which he had extended to her she sunk into a chair, and covering her face she wept aloud. For a time the silence was unbroken save by her bursting sobs, and scarcely could Carleton withhold his sympathising tears. He did not withdraw the hand which the poor creature detained with all the fondness which

for so many years had been treasured in her heart, patiently awaiting her recovery from this first outpouring of long restrained feeling. At length she spoke, and "blessed the hour" when the "sin of murder" was taken from her burthened conscience. "Yes," she said in answer to some soothing words of Carleton, "yes, I always in my heart considered that my selfish want of care occasioned the death of my precious little charge, and I have ever thought of myself as little better than a murderer. Oh sir! never since that awful day have I laid down in peace, but let me look at you, let me be sure that there is no mistake. Yes" she said, after a close examination of his features, "yes, I thank God his likeness to my dear dear mistress is sufficient proof; but when I remember too, that I put that picture of his mother round his little neck the day she died, and taught him to talk to it, and call it by her name, I can have no doubt that this is indeed my dear 'Master Herbert.'"

"Herbert! is that my name?" asked Carleton."

"Yes sir, you were named Herbert after an uncle of my master's, and your other name is *Carlington*."

Many were the interesting questions which followed, but old Nanny could tell him nothing of his father, of whom she said she had not heard for many years, but that when last she had heard his name mentioned she was told he was gone abroad. And now perceiving that this agitating interview had somewhat fatigued her and fearing that her mind would not bear so much ex-

citement, Carleton took his leave, promising to visit her every day if she wished to see him.

Old Nanny soon became a great favourite with **Kate** and the children, and it was delightful to witness her happiness and pleasure as she sat in her comfortable chair surrounded by a group of the family party all desirous to show her kindness and respect. As to Carleton, or as we must now call him, Carlington, he never tired of asking her questions and gathering from her answers, descriptions of his parents, their home and mode of life : and he dwelt with delight on her account of his mother who was she told him, "A lovely lady," and "*you* Mr. Herbert are the very moral her." This caused much merriment to the young ones, and Nanny cheerfully joined in the laugh though she did not comprehend its cause. On one subject only was Nanny reserved, she still evidently dreaded meeting her old master and seldom mentioned his name : nor could any argument remove from her mind the painful feelings which she still indulged on the subject.

Charles was so busily engaged at this time at his office, that he was unable to pursue the investigation which so much interested him. At length one morning finding himself unexpectedly at leisure for a few hours, he decided upon putting in execution a little scheme which for some days he had been silently contemplating : and entering old Nanny's room at Sir Edmund Beauchamp's, he said in a rapid manner, "Come, Nanny, I want you to put yourself under my

guidance and go out with me for I have something to show you that will I think interest you very much, and you ought to see a little of this great town, so come along."

"Oh sir!" said Nanny, "you are all so good to me, but surely you wouldn't go out with a poor old almshouse woman, would you?"

"And why not, pray? I shall be quite delighted," said Charles: "and depend upon it I will take as much care of you as if you were my own old nurse. Come, I will have a nice carriage at the door in half an hour, and mind I won't take any body but you."

"Well, well-a-day, and so I am to go out riding, am I, Master Charles? what would the folks at dear Grays-brook think of such an honour? well sir, I shall be quite ready: but I s'pose, sir, you'll tell my lady and dear Master Herbert, that I am going."

"O never mind about that, leave that all to me, I shall arrange every thing;" and away ran Charles quite pleased at having met with so little opposition to this part of his plan. At the time appointed old Nanny made her appearance in her neat blue cloth gown and old-fashioned black silk bonnet; her long black mittens were drawn tightly up to the elbows, and in compliment to Charles she had put on a fine clear muslin apron, a relic of former days, which became her mightily and added much to her singular and picturesque appearance. Charles placed her comfortably in the carriage which he had brought to

the door, but having taken advantage of Lady Beau-champ's being gone out with Kate, he had not told any one of what he called his intended abduction of Miss Nanny Meadows. Having given all needful instructions to the man who drove them, they now proceeded rapidly through the streets of London. Charles talked kindly and pleasantly and pointed out to his companion everything which he thought might afford her interest or amusement. On, on they went, and to all enquiries as to their destination he was impenetrably deaf. At last he saw that they were rapidly approaching the place to which he was conducting her and he leant forward and looking up in Nanny's face began to talk rapidly to her and diverted her attention till the right moment should arrive for the execution of his little scheme. At length the carriage suddenly stopped. "Now Nanny," said Charles, "dear old woman, tell me, do you know that house?"

Nanny looked, clasped her hands, and sank back uttering a feeble cry; for one moment she was speechless, and then almost in a tone of terror she said, "O sir, I cannot look upon that place, I cannot enter those gates. O yes, yes, it is indeed my poor master's house! but how could I venture to see him, should he be living still, even now? he would not I am sure endure the sight of one that has caused him so much sorrow."

Charles soothed and tranquillised her as best he could, and then gently handing her from the carriage

he led her round by the back entrance to Mrs. Fairly's room, explaining as they went that he would spare her any further pain for the present, but that he wished her to sit half an hour with a kind person who would take care of her till he returned. He then left her for a few minutes, and having found Fairly he gained her permission to bring Nanny to sit in her room while he himself saw Mr. Crosby. The poor old woman had scarcely recovered the shock which the sight of her master's home had occasioned her, and she sat in silence not recognising the room into which she had been brought from its having undergone considerable change since she last saw it, and thus, though she knew she was very near the place where she once had lived so happily, she did not comprehend that she really was under the roof of her "injured master," as she still called him. Charles having seen her comfortably settled now went in search of Mr. Crosby, and proceeded at once to the library. Here he found his old friend busily engaged in writing letters. He looked up when Charles entered and holding out his hand said, "Ah my dear boy, I scarcely thought you would come so early, though I was glad to find from your note that you were at leisure this afternoon;—but come, sit down, I have nearly finished my letters and then I shall be quite disengaged."

A few minutes of silent reflection enabled Charles to decide on the course he would pursue. It was evident that his conjectures had been correct and that

in his dear good old friend Carlington would find a father, but he felt that much caution must be employed in announcing this joyful news to Mr. Crosby lest the surprise should prove too much for his already disturbed mind and feeble frame. As soon, therefore, as the letters were finished and Mr. Crosby said that "now he was at liberty," Charles drew his chair close to his side and said, "My object in visiting you to-day, sir, was chiefly that I might have a little conversation with you about my dear sister."

"Ah a very nice sweet girl, indeed; I don't often take fancies, but I may tell you, Charles, that her good and dutiful conduct has won my sincere admiration: she is unlike most women, I think, there are but few who are worth one's affection, I believe."

"Well then," said Charles, "I am sure you will be pleased when I tell you that she will soon be united to the young man whom you saw with her at Mrs. Marston's."

"Hey, what! married! what to that young man with the dark curling hair! Well, well, I'm glad of it—I liked his face. Ah those *eyes* of his have pursued my thoughts ever since. Yes, yes, I shall feel an interest in him—and what is his name, Charles?"

"His name is—*Carlington*."

At this name Mr. Crosby started and trembled violently, then turning suddenly he seized both of Charles's hands and looking earnestly in his face said, "Young man, take care! you *dare* not trifle with me;—what

mean you? You are agitated,—speak! who, who is this dark-eyed stranger?—my name, too, is *Carlington!* Can it, O God! can it be that he whom I so long have mourned is to be restored to me?—Speak, speak, Charles, and torture me not with this dreadful suspense!"

Charles knelt by his side and gently supported him while he said, "Be calm, be firm, dear friend, I will not deceive you;—I have much reason to hope that this happiness will be yours."

"Mr. Crosby spoke not, and so rigid were his features and his frame so still, that Charles felt alarmed lest the shock had destroyed him. After a time, however, he recovered, and was able to listen to Charles's narrative, by which he felt clearly convinced that Carlington was indeed his long-lost son. In the course of their interesting conversation Mr. Crosby told Charles that his name originally was Carlington, but he said, "when I lost him who should have inherited this name I felt so great a repugnance to hearing it that I resolved to assume that of my uncle, Mr. Herbert Crosby, and when I returned, after a residence of ten years more in the West Indies, I was so much altered that no one recognized me as Mr. Carlington, and I have never since resumed the name."

Charles now went to fetch old Nanny, who, although at first greatly alarmed when she was told that her master still lived and wished to see her, did not long oppose Charles's request that she would let him con-

duct her to his presence:—and she was soon made happy by an affectionate assurance that she was quite forgiven by her respected master. Leaving Nanny to tell her own story and to talk over past events, Charles—kind-hearted Charles—is gone on wings of generous impatience to bring the long-lamented son to the arms of his father. Nor does one selfish thought or consideration check the ardour of that disinterested mind when at length he has the delight of witnessing the reunion of these friends, who are both so truly beloved by him. But we must draw a veil over the scene which then took place, and following Charles's example we will close the door and leave Herbert Carlington alone with his now too happy father.

While Charles was engaged in these interesting scenes, one of almost equal importance occurred at the home of his own family. It was at about the same hour in which he was passing through the streets of London with old Nanny that Miss Moffat in a flurry of impatience ascended the stairs leading to the studio, on entering which the good lady appeared so agitated that Mrs. Sinclair said, "I hope you have brought us no bad news, Miss Moffat."

"Na, na, Maistress Sinclair, I'm no a bird o' ill omen, forbye I hope I've brought ye some varra gude news, though ye'll maybe hae some heart-sair mingled wi' yer joy. I just got the morn's paper fra my cousin, an I was speering was there any news whan I cam

upo' this paragraph ; "—and Miss Moffat read aloud the following sentence :—" At Elmsgrove, in the 65th year of his age, Harry Sinclair, Esq. We understand the family estates are left by will to Algernon Sinclair, Esq. the half brother of the deceased." " And," said Miss Moffat, " the Lord be thankit for this an all his mercies."

It was quite impossible to resist the smile which this speech occasioned ;—yet this sudden announcement brought back a tide of early association to the heart of Mr. Sinclair, and he felt for a short time some emotion for which even to himself he could scarcely account. Years had elapsed without any sort of intercourse between him and his brother, nor had he at any time received from him any marks of affection, still the home of his boyhood rose up before his memory, and early ties and habits were recalled. These feelings were, however, evanescent and were soon overcome, and it was with a feeling of thankfulness that he admitted the hope that in his last hours Mr. Harry Sinclair had endeavoured to compensate for his long neglect of his family, and he returned to the studio, from which he had at first hastily withdrawn, and thanking Miss Moffat for her kind interest in this affair he told her that he should take immediate steps to ascertain the truth of this newspaper report, " and," he added, " I hope indeed we may find some cause for thankfulness."

" Weel, weel," said Miss Moffat, " I trust ye may

a' yet be happier far than I hae yet known ye, but I'm thinking ye'll a' maybe gang far awa, and in your ain hame ye'll aibleens sume forget me an the puir little lassie, little Maggie."

"No, no, indeed, not so, my dear Miss Moffat, believe me we can none of us ever forget your many acts of kind and delicate attention to us here, and in future years I trust we shall number you among our truest friends."

"I thank ye fra the bottom of my heart, Maistress Sinclair, ye were always kind and douce wi' me, an I sall never forget ye a', but O it will be varra dull when ye are a' gone an I sall miss ye sairly;" and here the poor Scotch lady hastily retreated quite unable to conceal how much even the thoughts of parting had grieved her kind warm heart.

As soon as Miss Moffat had left the room Mr. Sinclair exclaimed, "Well Emily, this is indeed a most important event to us; should this account prove correct we shall at once be relieved from all our sad embarrassments. And now I shall go immediately and find my old friend Mr. Pleydell and get him to aid me in investigating the affair," and after a little discussion and preparation he set off on his interesting errand, which as he told Mrs. Sinclair might probably detain him some hours. The little girls were gone to Lady Beauchamp's where they now passed much of their time and even Honor was gone out, so that ere long Mrs. Sinclair found the house very dull and lonely and she quite

longed for some kind sympathising friend to whom she might speak on the exciting subjects which now filled her mind and thoughts. So many things to demand attention and no one to advise with! she sat down and tried to find amusement in her usual occupations—but all to no purpose. At last taking the newspaper in her hand she determined to go with it to Miss Moffat's apartments, and as she went down the long flights of stairs she tried to excuse to herself her restless desire for some companion. She was in the midst of these reflections when the sudden stopping of a carriage followed by a loud ringing of the door bell startled her and tripping against the mat at the foot of the stairs she stumbled and nearly fell. Who could it be? perhaps Algernon himself—and then he might be displeased; hastily she turned and retracing her steps to the first landing above she awaited the opening of the door, when to her great delight she heard Kate's sweet voice address the little girl saying, "Well little Maggie, and how are you, my bonnie wee thing, and how is good Miss Moffat?"—but no further could she proceed for her mother rushed towards her exclaiming, "O my darling Kate, I am so very glad that you are here, I was longing to see you for I have such news to tell you."

Kate's loving embrace and tender kisses evinced the delight with which she met her mother, and as they ascended the stairs in a tumult of affectionate pleasure she said, "And *I* too, dearest mamma, have

heard something which will I trust prove good for you all."

A moment's explanation showed that each alluded to the same event, when Kate said she had hoped to be the first to bring these good tidings to her parents, "though perhaps, dear mamma, I ought not to consider it altogether a matter of congratulation, and dear papa might think me thoughtless. Does he feel this event at all painfully?"

"No my dear, I cannot suppose he does; it is so long since he has seen Mr. Harry Sinclair who ever treated him with the indifference of a stranger and always appeared to entertain almost a feeling of dislike towards him, indeed so much so that I can scarcely hope that the news which reached us to-day can be true; however your papa is gone to see Mr. Pleydell and to gain all the information he can on the subject."

And now they reach the studio rather tired and breathless with talking so earnestly while mounting the steep and many stairs, and as they enter the room Kate lays aside her little bonnet, gives "darling mamma" one more "little hug," and then seats herself on Rosy's small chair close by her mother's side, who softly strokes her lovely silken hair and seems delighted with its even increased luxuriance and beauty, and then Kate takes her hand and says, "O dearest mamma, it is so charming to have you all to myself for an hour or two! and I don't think we shall be interrupted, for papa cannot I am sure return for a long

time. I only hope this intelligence will prove correct and then, only think, you will all be removed from these gloomy rooms, and ere long you will I trust be enjoying freedom and fresh air at Elmsgrove which is I hear a lovely place. O will it not be charming, dearest mother, once more to enjoy the beauties of the country."

"It will indeed, dear Kate, be a great delight to exchange these close streets for the pure air of the country, but I should be ungrateful if I did not confess that God has been very gracious to us in our misfortunes and that even here in these apparently dull and lonely rooms I have passed some of the happiest hours of my life, and I can truly say, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity : ' your father and I have been compelled to use our talents for the maintenance of our family and we have found the path of active duty more pleasant, yes and more truly happy, than the idle useless one which for some years we had been pursuing ; your father has been so kind and considerate that I have never missed or regretted the absence of all other companions."

"Dear, dear mother, your sweet contented spirit is indeed to you a gem beyond all price, but I can assure you that often when I have been sitting beneath the beautiful trees at Granby I have shed tears at the thoughts of the imprisonment to which you and all my dear ones were subjected while I was surrounded by luxury."

“ Yes, dearest Kate, I doubt not that such were your feelings, but consider, my child, how much you have ameliorated our difficulties by your generous exertions, and how much have we been comforted in our troubles by the affectionate and considerate conduct of yourself and our other dear children ; never, I assure you, dearest Kate, shall I regret the adversity which has thus taught us the value of our mutual affection and sympathy, and I trust we have all learned a lesson which in future years will never lose its influence on our lives ;—but now, dear girl, there is one subject which I confess rather distresses me ; what if this intelligence of his half-brother’s death should induce your father to wish to postpone your marriage ?—it may be so, and I should greatly regret causing you both so painful a trial.”

“ O dearest mother ! do not, I beg you will not suffer such a thought to distress you, even should such delay be thought advisable how thankfully should we submit to it even for any length of time if we can only find that you are all relieved from your painful difficulties ; do not think of *us*, dearest mother, we are young and happy in each other’s sincere affection, only let us see you all in your proper places and no trial will be painful.”

Kate walked to the casement window as she spoke and looked down upon the long range of red tiled houses with their stacks of heavy smoking chimneys and occasional glaring skylights all now glowing in the hazy dancing heat of a July afternoon sun, and as

her thoughts reverted to the delicious scenes at Granby with their cool and pleasant shades her tears fell fast as she considered that during all the heat of that hot summer from day to day no other view than that on which she now gazed had met the eye of any of the dear inmates of that strange old apartment : her mother guessed her sad thoughts and taking her hand said, “Cheer up, my dearest girl, to *you* this must appear almost a prison, but I can assure you that we have had no leisure to feel dull, our time has been so much and so pleasantly occupied that all external objects have ceased to interest us, and when we have really required recreation we have always found it in our favourite pursuits of music, reading and chess, nor have we ever found our time hang heavily upon our hands, proving you know, dear Kate, that ‘Home is Home.’”

“Dearest mother,” said Kate, “I trust in future years I shall prove that I have indeed profited from your bright example, but come,” she said, “I really want to consult you on some subjects of importance, and we must not lose this opportunity.”

Long and earnestly did the mother and daughter now converse on the bright prospects which were opening before them, and Kate told her mother many circumstances which were qualified to raise the lover in the estimation of this truly excellent parent. At about five o’clock Mr. Sinclair returned full of pleasant intelligence, he had seen Mr. Pleydell and found him already apprised of the circumstances of Mr. H. Sinclair’s death, and he had told him that there was

he believed no shadow of doubt that the estates would be his, and that if all turned out well they might in a month be settled at Elmsgrove and that Mr. Pleydell intended to start that evening for that place in order to make all necessary enquiries and arrangements. After a little more chat Kate put on her bonnet and prepared to return to —— Square, but then came the question “whether dear Kate should postpone her marriage for a time?” and then papa kissed his darling girl and told her he thought he must leave that to the decision of her kind friends. At this moment Honor appeared at the door and told Kate that the carriage was arrived to take her back. Kate hid her blushing face on papa’s shoulder while she bade him farewell, and then taking leave of her mother followed Honor down stairs. On reaching the first landing Honor said, “Och thin, me dare Miss Kate, will ye grant me a moment of yer precious time, for shure I’ve something pertickler to tell ye;” and turning into a vacant room she petitioned Kate to follow her.

“ Well Honor, I fear you must not detain me long, but I can wait a few moments ; what is it? are you going to be married soon ? ”

“ Och, Miss Kate, shure ye *knew* I will not lave my dear lady at such a time,—no, no, Miss, but I’ve a story to tell ye.—I was sint out just now to some distance from here and just as I was coming home rather late, bad luck to me, when I came all at onct upon a little woman in black, and she standing looking earnestly upon a bunch of black and white stockings

hung out upon a door like sausages, and so she pulled out one and another to see what was the marks of price put upon 'em, mighty busy she was no doubt ; well I knowed her directly and stepping up behind her I says, 'An how are ye Mrs. I forgit's yer name.' 'Bundy's *my* name,' she says, 'but I don't know ye,' she says. 'Och thin,' says I, 'shure I'll niver forgit *you*, for ain't you the good woman that the kind gentleman sent wi' all the things to our house ?' 'Deed then ye says thru'e,' says she, 'but these good deeds is always beknown at last, and he is the kindest of men,' she says. 'Ah now,' says I, 'I shall always love to think of him and pray for him all the days of my life, for I am shure he is a good man, but where will he be living ?' says I. 'Och,' she says, mighty innocent-like, 'Mr. Crosby has always lived in the same house ever since I knowed him, and that's fifteen years. My husband died on board the vessel as brought Mr. Crosby home from the West Indies, and I was left a widow wi' six little children, and when he came to England he found me out and put me on in my business and helped me to maintain my family ; I keep a little broker's shop, and I assure you,' she says, I shall never be able to repay the kindness of that dear gentleman ;—but now do tell me how ever you found out as he sent them things, for I niver breathed a word of it in my life—I could swear I niver have, and I am afraid he will be very angry if he knows it has come out like ;'—so I told her, Miss Kate, she might depind on me for secresty, and thin,

Miss, I was in such a hurry to get home that I ran off like a lapwing."

"Now Honor," said Kate, "I do not think you were quite right to get this poor woman's secret from her in this way, and for the present remember I wish you not to repeat it, as I am sure it will do mischief; still a time may come when I may be glad of this information."

"Och thin, my darling Miss Kate, shure an' you won't go to be angered wid me; och I wish I could put back the secret into Mrs. Bundy agin, but that's impossible; however I'll not make no mischief niver I promise; so now pray don't look so sarious like, my dear young lady."

"Well, well, my good Honor, I am sure you did not mean any wrong, but another time you must be more careful."

"Och thin I will, and blessings on yer swate self, that always knows what is right better than such an ignorant girl as meself, bad cess to my foolish tongue, an' God bless ye, Miss; and will I be thrubbling ye to beg ye to thank kind Mr. Cowlton for his beautiful present to poor Rory?"

And now Kate bids poor Honor good bye with much kindness, and as she stands on the steps to look after the carriage she receives a kindly smiling look from her dear young lady, and retires to weep over the little fault which had been rebuked with so much gentleness.

When Kate reached home she hastily retired to

her room, and whilst dressing for dinner her thoughts dwelt much on all the interesting intelligence which she had just received; and she felt her curiosity most highly excited as to the motives which could have induced Mr. Crosby to show so much kind consideration to such perfect strangers; she was anxious too to know what steps she had better take, as she felt sure her Father would not like to remain under obligations to this extraordinary person; and at last she resolved to consult Carlington; no doubt he would dine at Sir Edmund's, and after dinner she would tell him all the circumstances of the case; but on entering the drawing-room she found only Lady Beauchamp there, who said, "Have you seen Mr. Carlington to-day, Kate? I thought he was probably with you as he has not been here."

But Kate had not seen him, nor did he arrive all the evening, and both she and her kind friend felt much disappointed.

The next morning was one of exciting interest to all the party at Sir Edmund Beauchamp's; soon after breakfast Carlington appeared, and with much emotion he disclosed to Kate the happy and interesting discovery which through the intervention of her brother had been effected on the preceding day, and great indeed was her astonishment at learning that the strange eccentric Mr. Crosby was the father of her beloved Carlington. She listened with breathless attention while he detailed to her all the circumstances of their

first meeting, and deeply and tenderly did she sympathise in his happiness, and as she put her head upon his shoulder she confided to him the secret reason of her interest in the person whom he had just discovered was his long lost father ; she told him of his many acts of kindness and benevolence towards her family, and also of the difficulty they had found in discovering who had thus from time to time contributed to their comfort, and then she told him of the little artifice by which Honor had beguiled the poor widow into betraying the secret of her kind patron, and also how penitent poor Honor had been when convinced that she had been culpable in this affair ; and she added, “ really, dear Herbert, it seems as if your father had been providentially guided in the interest which he has felt towards my family.”

“ My dearest Kate,” said Carlington, “ depend upon it we can never err in attributing to an overruling Providence all the events however trivial they may appear by which our welfare and our happiness can be affected, and I am truly thankful to find that my dear father fully recognises this truth ; he has already most affectingly acknowledged his sense of the wisdom and mercy of that dispensation by which he has thus for so many years been deprived of the idol of his heart. I trust, my dear Kate, his future life will now be fraught with happiness, and I am sure *you* will gladly aid me in soothing and cheering his declining age, while I sincerely hope your dear brother will continue to fill the place of an adopted son ; *I* you

know am more than amply provided with the gifts of fortune, and I trust my father will act towards Charles as he tells me he intended to have done had we never met again."

But now this interesting tête-à-tête was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Beauchamp, who came to offer her sympathizing congratulations, and then Carlington was dispatched to bring perforse his dear Father to join the anxiously expecting group of friends who would assemble to await his arrival; but when after an hour or two of interesting conversation the kind-hearted old gentleman rose and coming to Kate took her little hand and placed it in that of his son Herbert and pronounced a fervent "God bless you, my children," and then attempted a smile but only achieved a tear, why it was plain that sweet Kate had found a father too, and her blushing tearful smiling young face spoke more plainly than any words that her heart then promised that she would indeed be unto him a loving daughter.

It would be fruitless to attempt to describe all the scenes of interest and affection which now occurred in consequence of the late happy event; but it will perhaps be as well to state that poor old Nanny Meadows was taken into the house of Mr. Crosby and placed under the kind care of good Mrs. Fairly, in whom she found a most faithful friend, nor did she at all dislike the occasional visits of Mrs. Flitters, who appeared to her bewildered imagination as one of a quite new species of housekeeper, and who was to be sure "a won-

derful nice lady, but not a bit like a servant to my thinking;" but then adds old Nanny, "I am but a very old fashioned person you know, Mrs. Fairly."

The fifth of August was now rapidly approaching, and every needful arrangement and preparation had been made on a most liberal scale, though in consequence of her peculiar circumstances Kate had petitioned that no undue ostentation or display should mark the celebration of her marriage; her own two little sisters with Lady Beauchamp's three little girls were to be the attendants of the bride, and greatly was little Alice delighted when her physician consented to her taking her place among the youthful bridesmaids. This little girl was fast recovering from the effects of her accident, and had for some time been permitted to leave her recumbent position, and there appeared every reason to hope that her recovery would be completed in a few more months, and already the tinge of health had revisited her cheek. Kate's gentle but firm management had been of great service to her, and had rendered her so docile and amenable to authority, that her restoration to health had been greatly accelerated, while her affection for her kind and judicious instruc-tress knew no bounds, and much as she, in common with all her family, rejoiced in the prospect of happiness which Kate's marriage would ensure to her, yet the thought that they should so soon lose her from the domestic circle filled her young heart with sorrow; it was however with much satisfaction that Lady Beau-

champ found that Miss Hartop was desirous to leave London and if possible to reside in the country, and would gladly accept the situation which Kate's marriage would leave vacant, so that it was soon arranged that she should return with them at the end of August to Granby Hall.

And now who is there amongst our readers who could not fill up from memory the scene which a wedding morn presents ; the gentle, trembling, blushing bride, the affectionate playful greetings of the pretty bridesmaids, each in her simple dress of white, conveying a lovely bouquet of summer's most fragrant flowers, the last fond, fond embrace of the Mother, whose proud though agitated heart beats almost to bursting as she restrains the unbidden tear which wouldadden her darling's bridal morn ; then the gathering round the holy altar, and the solemn pledges there offered, the promises of years of future love, and mutual forbearance and assistance, and then the feast prepared by loving hands, the grateful scent of fruits and flowers, the parting blessing from beloved friends and parents, and lastly, the breathless speed which conveys from her home the loved and loving one for whom all hearts are breathing fervent prayers of fond affection. In scenes like this the morning of the fifth of August passed away — and Kate Sinclair became the happy bride of the good and generous Herbert Carlington.



CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

IT was a few days after Kate's marriage had taken place that Honor and her faithful Rory once more took their evening walk together, and as the affectionate girl expatiated on the loss she had sustained in "swate Miss Kate," Rory replied, "Arrah now, Honor, me darlint, shure you'll be wanting a friend more nor ivver; come say the word, an' let me be getting the purty little ring, and shure won't we be as happy as Miss Kate herself." And then Honor blushingly admits that "Shure the Masther is come into his property and he will soon go and take possession of it, and thin why they will not be in thrubble," and in short Rory says, "Hurra mavourneen, you will be my own swate little wife at last, and all the dearer for your love and constancy to the family as purtected ye, machree, when ye wor a poor orphan."

And now it only remains to state that Mr. Sinclair and his family soon afterwards removed to Elms Grove. The parting between them and poor Miss Moffat was a painful effort, and the children wept

sorely when they took leave of their favourite little Maggie; but as kind Miss Moffat said, “ Eh but siccans tears as mine must aye be unco selfish I’m thinking ; and Maggie hinny we must strive to rejoice in the weel doing of these kind friends ; ” and poor Miss Moffat sought to allay her own sorrow by ministering to the comfort of her little foster child, who was in future years to be her only companion, and Maggie in her turn endeavoured by affectionate gratitude to repay the kind care which Miss Moffat so lavishly bestowed.

Rory and his faithful Honor were united a few days before Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair left London, and to their great delight they learnt that Mr. Herbert Carlington had decided on receiving them into his service as soon as he took possession of his living at Granby, now vacant by the death of the good old Dr. Elliott, and where Carlington had already commenced building a handsome rectory house, in the hope that in future years his dear Father would come and occupy the one in which for so many years Dr. Elliott had resided; to this arrangement his father joyfully acceded, and many many happy years were added to the life of the kind and now gentle Mr. Crosby. Charles was now his constant companion, and was considered as his adopted son.

The Sinclairs, relieved from all the embarrassments and trials by which adverse circumstances had surrounded them, passed the remainder of their lives in

that sweet peace and tranquillity which emanates from the faithful discharge of appointed duties, and in the recollection of their past sorrows they ever remembered with gratitude the comfort which they had derived from the dutiful and loving conduct of their children.

THE END.



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